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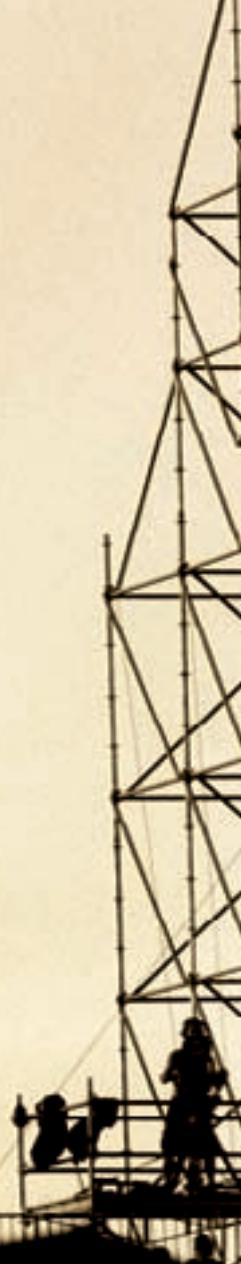
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© Frank Hoppen

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COMMENT

This is motocross, anything can happen!" I've lost count of how many times I've heard this cliché trotted out but, as always tends to be the case, it's only a cliché because it's true and there have been a number of 'anything' that have 'happened' over the last few weeks.

Following the British GP at Mallory last month it looked like Josh Coppins' title dreams were dead in the water. Mired all day in mid-pack, Lizard looked a shadow of his former self and his 11-12 scorecard saw him back in fourth in the MX1 series standings, 55 points behind his team-mate David Philippaerts. Now, just two GPs later, he's in second place, four points off the lead and going into the Swedish GP with a big head of steam. As Sutty put it "it's the greatest comeback since that other JC bloke!".

The law of 'Anything Can Happen' can also be a bad thing. Who would have thought that Billy MacKenzie would fail to qualify for a GP? But that's exactly what happened in France. Of course, it's not as cut-and-dried as that. Billiam spammed himself on the first lap of quali and so dazed was his "wee mcbrain" (Sutty again) he thought he was setting super-fast lap times when he was really just cruising round. And who would have thought that just two weeks later – cracked shoulder n'all – he'd lead both GP motos in Germany?

With Billy out for the Maxxis round at Desertmartin there was loads of speculation over who would win the MX1 class. Tom Church? James Noble? Brad Anderson? Mark Jones? One name that didn't come up on any of the internet MX forums – and, to be honest, in the DBR office either – was Wayne Smith. And who went out and won the overall with a 2-1 card? Yep, it was the Pioneer Yamaha rider who did the business in Ireland.

And it's not just in Europe that anything can happen. Last year Sean Hamblin came over from America to ride for the Swift Suzuki team, had a fairly hit-and-miss season (more miss than hit) and then headed home to race the AMA Nats as a privateer. Well he's now racing the Motocross class as a member of the factory Yamaha team – 12 months ago you'd have bet your mortgage against that.

But, y'see, this is motocross and – as we all know – anything can happen...

Sean

This time next year Tommy will have a bunch of Yanks chasing him...



\$HUT IT!

SEARLE SILENCES THE RUMOURS – HE WILL BE HEADING STATESIDE IN '09

It's always been Red Bull KTM rider Tommy Searle's goal to race the Lites class in America for the 2009 season regardless of whether he wins this year's bruising battle for MX2 world championship honours or not. Currently sitting second in the MX2 series behind team-mate Tyla Rattray, Tommy's still set to go Stateside next year even though rumours are circulating through the MX grand prix pits about how the American credit crunch and financial difficulties the country is currently facing might force certain factories to cut back on their racing efforts.

Even the most casual of observers can grasp that with the US\$ being so weak importing and selling motorcycles in America is a much less lucrative business than it has been in the past. With sales figures being well below budget all of the big five manufacturers may be forced to cut back their racing budgets for 2009. The big rumour in Europe is that Searle will become a victim of these cutbacks although that's something he's quick to dispel.

"I spoke to Kurt the other day and everything is still good to go for next year," says Tommy. "I sorted a two-year contract out with KTM in January earlier this year before this whole issue arose. That's good for me because I'm lead to believe that everything over there is in decline. That's not just with KTM either – it's with every manufacturer. They're all downsizing and cutting back on their number of employees as well as cutting back the riders' salaries. The most important thing for me is that my deal won't be affected and so it's all good for me – it's spot on."

Confident that his career plan remains on track, Tommy's now able to concentrate on winning this year's MX2 world title. The freshly turned 19-year-old took charge of the series with a double win in France earlier this month when the other two main title contenders – Rattray and Tony Cairoli – floundered. Then in a cruel twist of fate Tommy suffered some seriously bad luck himself at the German GP just two weeks later to end up second in the series, 11 points behind the South African.

"I'm not worried about that," says Tommy. "I was 10 points down before France and look what happened there – I've done it before and I can do it again. I'm actually really looking forward to the rest of the season. There are some sand races coming up after South Africa and I'll be preparing for them soon. I like sand and I much prefer that kind of track to the hardpack circuits like those in France and Germany."

The 2008 MX2 series is now boiling down to a three-horse race but it's still a tough one to call which is something that Tommy himself is well aware of. "It's us three every week now and I think it's the one who doesn't make so many mistakes who is gonna win the championship. Tyla has been winning GPs for six years so I always expected him to be up there and it's the same with Cairoli too – he's won championships before and while he's not been around for as long as Tyla he does have a lot more experience than me. I mean, I only started winning races in the second half of last year and I've also only just turned 19 – I think people forget that sometimes."

WIN!WIN!WIN!

TLD LIMITED EDITION OAKLEY GASCANS MUST BE WON

Even on a typical British summer day the sun can put in a surprise appearance, poking through the clouds when you least expect it to dazzle you with its lukewarm rays. When this happens we tend to **A) squint** and **B) not look cool**. Neither of these is good.

So why not kill two birds with one stone with a pair of Troy Lee Limited Edition Oakley Gascans worth a penny shy of 130 notes? There are only 5000 pairs of these available worldwide and thanks to www.mx1.co.uk that figure's just about to drop to 4999 with one very lucky – and soon to be very cool – DBR reader winning a pair all of their very own!

To be in with a chance of winning all we want to know is in which Californian city is Troy Lee Designs based.

Is it:

- A) San Francisco**
- B) Corona**
- C) Sol**
- D) Dos Equis**
- E) Margarita**

Think you know the answer? Then write it down on the back of a postcard, stuck down envelope or crispy corn tortilla and send it – along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number – to us at '**Gascans Comp**', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG. You can also enter online by going to www.dirtbikerider.com and following the competition link.

Entries close on August 7 with the first correct answer drawn totally at random after this date getting the sunnies.



WIN!WIN!WIN!

RYAN VILLOPOTO REPLICA KIT UP FOR GRABS

Fancy tearing up your local track looking like a beefy version of AMA Lites god Ryan Villopoto? Well thanks to our mates at Madison we've got a set of super-rare Kawasaki/Villopoto 2008 Pro Circuit replica Thor Phase kit to give away this month.

So just how rare is it? Due to some pesky licensing red tape the kit never made it over to the UK so this side of the pond it's about as rare as a zebra with a pulse when sharp-shooting Ryan's stalking the savannah.

And to go with the size L jersey and 34" jeans Madison have chucked in a green Pro Circuit replica helmet, Core spearmint gloves and a pair of Celtic goggles – that's around £400 worth of quality kit just for telling us what Ryan Villopoto's nickname is.



Is it:

- A) Sweet Potato**
- B) Jacket Potato**
- C) New Potato**
- D) Chipped Potato**
- E) Sauté Potato**
- F) Mashed Potato**
- G) Boiled Potato**
- H) RV**

When you've decided on your answer write it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and send it – along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number – to us at '**Sweet Potato Comp**', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG. Alternatively you can hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and enter online.

Closing date is August 7 with the first correct answer drawn totally at random after this date getting the kit.



WIN! WIN! WIN!

2008 RM125 MUST BE WON!

Not so very long ago it looked like the game was up for high-revvin', sweet-sounding, two-strokes. But reports of their death were greatly exaggerated and in the right hands a stroker's still a potent weapon – go to any club meeting and you'll get a whiff of pre-mix and thanks to the DEP championship there's even a high-profile race series dedicated to two-smokers.

For the second year on the trot we've joined forces with Suzuki GB to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a brand-spankingly-new yellow rocketship – this time around it's a RM125! And what's more, if you win – and you're fast enough – you could even earn a place in the Suzuki RM125cc Cup and have a chance at winning a 2009 model at the DEP series finale. That's what's known in the trade as a double bonus!

The competition kicked off in our June mag, continued in July and signs off in this month's issue. In each of the three special competition editions we've asked a simple Suzuki-related question – all you have to do is work out the correct answers, send them in and keep your pinkies crossed.

Each correct answer is a valid entry so if you've missed a competition issue you can still enter and, even better, if you've bought all three competition issues then you've got three separate shots at winning the RM125! That's what's known in the trade as a triple bonus!

All we ask is that entries are submitted on official entry forms so no computer scans, photocopies or crayoned efforts etc – they'll just get filed in the bin...

SORTed!

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◆ Riders of RM125s from a different year may also enter (subject to a one-off charge of £50)

Easy huh? If you're already a SORT club member just log-in or if not simply visit the SORT website at www.suzukioffroadteam.co.uk and add in any race results you've had in the club scene. Then pick your best eight results to secure your place in the national standings and be in with a chance of lifting the Suzuki RM125 Cup and winning a 2009 RM125!



Bonus Question!

TEXT IN TO WIN!

Fancy a fourth chance to win our '08 RM125? Of course you do! And here's how you go about it... Simply check out our bonus question #4 below and when you've got the answer text the word DBRSUZ, followed by a space, your answer (either A, B or C), then your name and postcode to 81800. You will receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Ricky Carmichael is also known as...

- A)** The S.T.O.A.T.
- B)** The G.O.A.T.
- C)** The G.O.O.S.E.

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QUESTION #3

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C) Starling D) Thrush

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GORDON CROCKARD

BARK BUSTER!

THROTTLE-CRAZED IRISHMAN + THICK DUST CLOUD + HEFTY TREE = CARNAGE! GOOD WORK GORDY...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Jason Hooper

All's well with me and times are good. I feel I have better days ahead of me in the very near future and I'm working each day to be sure that I'll be in the best shape I can be for when I get my chance to shine. The GNCC summer break has arrived and the floodgates have opened with opportunities coming from several directions. I ain't taking a break that's for sure and in the next two months you'll see evidence of what I've chosen to do with my time.

I went to a round of the AMA national MX championship to watch. It was at High Point Raceway and unfortunately it poured with rain on the Saturday when practice was due to run. I was only there for Saturday as I was racing myself the following day at a venue five hours drive further up the road. I only got to see two Lites practice sessions and then the organiser cancelled the rest of the day's riding to save the track for Sunday's race day.

I'm still glad I went as I got talking to Tim Ferry and Ryan Villopoto about wrist injuries and what surgery they'd had to help get rid of the pain and also to increase the movement of the wrist. My wrist has been a problem since breaking the scaphoid bone in '05 when I was kindly thrown end over end up the Portuguese GP track from my Ohlins suspended 450 Yamaha – nice experience!

Ferry's left wrist hardly moves but that's the best he can get from it. It's the clutch lever side so that's better than if it was the right wrist which is supposed to open the throttle. Villopoto's problem wrist is his right one and it also has hardly any movement. When he rides he wears a wrist brace and if you look at a photo of him on the gas you'll see how little his wrist moves and how he has to 'chicken wing' his arm to get the throttle open. I know how that feels as my right wrist is fairly stiff and sore to ride with but nowhere near as bad as Villopoto's. He might have more trouble hanging on to a 450 with his dodgy wrist than his current 250 ride though.

The overall scene at the national was as I imagined – the track looked mega. The trucks are mind blowing and the motor homes huge. The atmosphere is simply motocross racing. To compare it to GP racing would be pointless as the differences are vast and two completely separate cultures of living between European people and American people.

I left the national and drove up to New York State to race a round of the National Hare Scramble Championship the next day. It was without a doubt the worst dust I have ever ridden in my entire life. I couldn't believe it. Seriously, there were these big field sections that you blast across to link to the woods. Normally you'd be in top gear touching 80mph but with that dust the most you could push to would be second gear at half-throttle. It was madness. I choked my way to eighth at the finish which I was pleased with.

The following week I raced a GNCC in even more dust. This time the dust was thick and heavy in the trees and actually more dangerous than the hare scramble I discovered as I hit a tree that I didn't even see! The bike was destroyed and I couldn't finish.

Heath Voss – the 2005 world supercross champion – rode the hare scramble and was also riding the GNCC round where I hit the tree in the dust. He was a guest rider on the team and was considering making the change to woods racing. He also had a massive crash in the dust and hit a tree. He didn't finish either and I think he's not so interested in dodging trees anymore.

I did another round of the hare scramble championship at the weekend past and was looking forward to less dust. Thankfully that was the case and I managed to finish third just behind my team-mate Glenn Kearney.

I'm well used to the heat now and I can feel the benefits of training in the high humidity we experience here in Kentucky. I hope the weather is good for when I go home as I have really enjoyed the sunshine here.

I've been keeping an eye on the MX world championship results and it's quite interesting to see the different winners in MX1. Sure is better than the predictable championships we've had in the last number of years. It's fantastic to see Shaun Simpson going so fast and putting himself at the top of the results – that's impressive improvement in one year. Well done.

By the time this issue is on the shelves I should be back in Europe. I'll hopefully see you at some events and I look forward to returning to my homeland.

See ya then...
The Fanta Bomb!

TRES BON!

LIVY LANCELOT TAKES CONTROL OF THE WOMEN'S WORLD MX CHAMPIONSHIP

Entering the French round wearing the series leader's pink plate, Livia Lancelot feels the pressure of an expectant home crowd and makes some unforced mistakes to end the day with a 2-5 scorecard and loses the series lead to Kiwi Katherine Prumm who goes 3-2. The big winner on the day however is championship latecomer Steffi Laier who does the double making it four motos on the trot for the KTM-supported rider.

Between the French and German races Prumm – who's already suffering with a snapped ACL – crashes in a training accident and breaks her collarbone which ends her season prematurely. Lancelot who arrives in Germany with a reet fancy new red hair do – "my manager Roger Pourcel said I only made those mistakes in France because I was blonde so now they won't happen again" – rides the perfect heat in race one to lead pretty much from start to finish despite some stiff opposition from Maria Franke.

Backing that win up with a solid third in race two to take second overall, the 20-year-old French femme ties on points with Laier to ensure she'll enter the last round of the series at Lierop in September with a healthy buffer between herself and the speedy German.

While UTAG Yamaha's Megan Lewis fails to qualify in France and only makes it in as first reserve in moto two in Germany, Sophia Paull scores at both rounds and takes a season best 11th at Teutschenthal. Series newcomer Hannah McLeod fails to score points in Germany at her debut race of the series.

HONOURSEVEN!

RAGA AND BOU WIN ONE APIECE

With one round in France and another in Italy the battle for WTC honours between ex-world champion Adam Raga and the reigning king of trials Toni Bou rages like wildfire.

Raga rides to victory at the French round held in the small town of Maisse. Tied with Bou through the first five sections, fives lost by the Montesa star on sections six and eight give the Gas Gas rider a clear advantage going into the second lap. Bou pulls a few marks back though and takes the lead but a five on the very last section of the day means the chance to extend his championship lead over Raga slips away.

But Bou bounces back in Tolmezzo in Italy and regains the points lost to Raga in France to sit 15 points ahead of his Spanish countryman in the championship with four rounds remaining.

It's a month of average results for the Brits. Michael Brown has a pair of ninths while Dougie Lampkin is definitely disappointed as he slips one place in the series standings behind Albert Cabestany after suffering a seventh place finish in Italy! James Dabill runs 7-6 on his Mont and that sees him draw level with Marc Freixa.

Loris Gubian takes control of the Junior championship with a pair of wins to move four points clear of Alexz Wigg in the standings as Alexz is only able to notch up third and fourth place finishes. Gas Gas' Sam Haslam sits third in the championship.

A win and a sixth see Jack Challoner extend his lead over Spaniard Francesc Moret in the Youth championship. The Beta rider dominates in Maisse but comes unstuck in Tolmezzo. Still 25 points clear, it's gonna take something of a disaster for Challoner to lose his lead with just four rounds remaining.

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STEPHEN SWORD

CHILLIN' N' SPILLIN'!

SWORDY HAS SOME DOWN TIME ON AND OFF THE TRACK BUT HE'S READY TO COME BACK WINNING!

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutty

After the British GP we had another weekend off which is always nice as we don't get that many throughout the year. When I have a weekend off I train a little differently than I would if I had a race on the Sunday. DT sets the programme so I have more hard days on the physical side as well as maintaining the riding skills. By the time Sunday comes you can feel you've done a full week's work and it's money in the bank as they say.

Jodie and I just chilled around the house that weekend. I'm quite happy having a lazy Sunday when I can. Saint Jean d'Angely was the next stop on the calendar, a track I really like and one I was expecting good things from. Qualifying went well with me finishing second behind Searle. I was riding with a good pace and feeling confident.

The first race I gated second behind Simpson then I made a silly mistake at the top of the first hill and I clipped his back wheel going over the spine jump resulting in me going down. Back in 28th on the opening lap I had it all to do and I could only manage 14th at the finish.

I wasn't happy with that so I wanted a good one in the second race. Race two was going okay I came from 10th up to fifth and I was catching fourth until I crashed with 10 minutes to go. It was a silly crash really, not big and not high speed. I got on the power too early, she spat me off and I landed straight on my shoulder.

When I got up I knew straight away I had done something and at first I thought I'd dislocated my shoulder. I put my hand under my shirt and all I could feel was a bone sticking up. We went straight to the local hospital for an x-ray. The result was no broken bones but a separated AC joint – they couldn't tell me how badly damaged the ligaments were though.

I booked an appointment to see my doctor in Belgium the next day. Instead of flying back home first I travelled back with the race truck to

the workshop. It wasn't too bad, the pain was mild but I was more gutted about not scoring points again and whether I would be able to race Desertmartin the following week. The scan went okay – there was no major damage to the ligaments.

Ideally I needed a three-week rest but that wasn't an option with Desertmartin just six days away. I was in a sling until Thursday then I had some treatment on it and did all I could with the time I had to get it better. I wasn't sure how I would get on but I had to try to get something out of the day. I'm not going to give you the full rundown lap-by-lap but I came away with 19 points and lost the lead in the championship but very much kept myself in the hunt for the title.

The pain was too much so I decided to miss the German GP – like I said the injury needs rest to get better so it made no sense to try to and ride in Germany. It was a hard decision to make as I don't want to drop points in the GPs either. Bloody injuries!

It's getting better daily but you're always asking for a lot when you want it fixed in a couple of weeks. I will make sure it is right before I get back, it's not something I want bothering me for the rest of the year just because I came back a week early. Better to come back strong! It's not only disappointing for me but the whole team gets affected, they put in so much hard work to win. It doesn't make it any easier for them with the other two MX2 riders injured too and that's why I must win when I return – I think this every day it's what gives me the motivation to train hard and stay focused.

All my sponsors have been great actually and it's good to have good people around you not only when you're doing well but also when times are tough. Well not a great deal more to say apart from I'm very much looking forward to getting on it again.

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JUSTIN BARCLAY

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

WHEN HE'S NOT WEARING LEATHER TROUSERS, POUTING A LOT AND THROWING SHAPES ON STAGE WITH HIS BAND MARIA WILLSON, GUITAR HERO JUSTIN BARCLAY CAN USUALLY BE FOUND AT THE CONTROLS OF A DIGGER BUILDING SOME OF BRITAIN'S BEST-KNOWN MX TRACKS...



Ace track builder Justin Barclay with his dad, Ian

It doesn't matter how good you are at motocross, one thing is a dead cert – if there's no track then you ain't playing. While doing our duty at the British GP at Mallory Park, DBR woke the man in the digger and discovered the world of dirt, diesel and 48-hour days...

DBR: Introduce yourself and tell us what you do.
JB: "Hi I'm Dirk Diggler...no, seriously, my name is Justin Barclay and I'm a motocross track builder and guitarist."

DBR: How did you get into track building?
JB: "My dad, Ian, has always been building tracks. He used to grade Matchams back in the '70s and he used to build all of our schoolboy tracks. In 2001 we opened our own track in Salisbury – Cusses Gorse – and basically my dad gave me a digger and a dumper and said 'go and build the track!'"

DBR: Which is the biggest/most well known track that you've built?

JB: "I guess it would have to be here today at Mallory Park. I built Donington Park last year but looking at the crowd, excitement and standard of racing then today has put the biggest smile on my face so far."

DBR: Do you design them as well as build them? Is it a start to finish deal?

JB: "Yeah, I work with the Youthstream track designer and we'll visit the site and set out a rough plan. I'll then come back and lay the track out and then we'll have a look at putting in the features and things like that. We had an idea of how many corners we wanted and where the start and pit lane were going to be but other than that I had a pretty free rein here at Mallory."

DBR: How many of you does it take to get the track built?

JB: "There's such a big team, so many people that help make the event. Track building wise we use four key guys plus myself on the machinery but all in there's about 50 of us."

DBR: How long does it take – start to finish – to build a track like Donington or Mallory?

JB: "This track has taken quite a long time as it had both rider and public input. As far as actual building time this has taken us about three weeks to put together, Donington was

two-and-a-half weeks."

DBR: Do you have a motocross background?

JB: "I rode some schoolboy nationals when I was younger but then I had some injuries and my music career started taking off, now I just ride for fun really. I like to keep my toe in just in case someone says 'well you have a go at it then' when I build a track!"

DBR: How much plant is required?

JB: "Normally I go on a ruling of two excavators, a bulldozer and something to move the dirt with – something like a dumper or tractor and trailer. We've been lucky here as EP Industries came on board with the Hyundai machines which has been great as they're involved with the GP circuit anyway."

DBR: Do you ship soil in when building a track?

JB: "Yes, here the old practice track has made up about a third of the track and then we shipped in about 60,000 tons of soil to make up the other two-thirds as well as the spectator areas."

DBR: What requirements are laid down by the FIM as regards the track itself?

JB: "The main requirements are the start straight, pitlane and first corner, followed by track width which has to be 12 metres on the jumps. On the corners, of which there has to be 20-22, we can come in to about eight to 10 metres."

DBR: Which of your tracks are you most proud of and why?

JB: "That's my little supercross track that I built at home, it's awesome!"

DBR: In your opinion what is it that makes a track great?

JB: "That's a tough question. I'd have to say it's the racing – if people can race around it then that makes it a good track. Also it has to be what the fans enjoy, give the fans what they want."

DBR: When designing a track how important is the spectator viewing?

JB: "England is the most critical place in the world for motocross so you have to keep the fans happy. In the US the fans don't mind being about 10 metres back from the track, in the UK people want to be as close as possible – close enough to touch the riders! The British GP has the

bigest and best atmosphere, that's why it's very important to the world motocross circuit that it comes here each year."

DBR: How do you know that the face of a jump is the correct angle and someone isn't going for a trip over the bars?

JB: "There's no such thing as a magic angle, I started learning how to build a jump when I was younger for BMX. Basically I just look at it and think 'yeah that's about right'."

DBR: Do you build private tracks for people?

JB: "That's one thing I haven't been approached about, not one person has ever asked...that's not to say that I wouldn't be up for it though."

DBR: Give us a ballpark figure.

JB: (Laughing) "Call me Monday and we'll negotiate!"

DBR: In your opinion which is the best motocross track in the world and why?

JB: "It would have to be a choice of three – Isle of Wight, Foxhill and Glen Helen. Glen Helen because it's so wide open and fast, it's just a crazy, crazy place."

DBR: Are supercross tracks harder to build than motocross tracks?

JB: "Uuhhhmm, they're about the same but with an SX track you're looking at a much shorter timescale. The first time I built one I ended up working a 48-hour non-stop day as there were no windows in the stadium I didn't realise the time going by...good old Red Bull!"

DBR: What have you got coming up in 2008?

JB: "Hopefully a holiday! My next contract is in South Africa building the GP track out there, I've also just negotiated a contract with Ireland to build the new circuit in Dublin and then maybe the des Nations. More importantly, I'd like to have a recording contract with my band Maria Willson – Youthstream are thinking of using us as the official MX1 band which means they'd play our music during the TV programme intro and I think later on in the year we have a tour supporting Bryan Adams."

If you would like a Justin Barclay track in your back garden or simply get the guy to play guitar at your wedding then feel free to contact him at justinbarclay@hotmail.com

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MONSTER MEN!

THIS MONTH FACTORY YAMAHA RIDERS DAVID PHILIPPAERTS AND JOSH COPPINS FACE OFF...



As the GP was in town we thought it only right and proper that we hung out at the Monster Yamaha rig, enjoying huge lumps of parmesan washed down with copious amounts of espresso. Once refuelled it was down to business with pre-season title favourite Josh Coppins and series leader David Philippaerts...

DBR: Who would play you in a film of your life?

DP: "Will Smith."

JC: "Nick Moran, the guy who played Eddy in Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

DP: "That was last week, I work on my own practice bike at home."

JC: "My cousin works on my practice bikes now so it has to be a couple of years ago back in '06."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

DP: "Yes, no problem."

JC: "No, not at all. I could rebuild the top end and change the clutch of a two-stroke but as far as four-strokes go I haven't a clue."

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

DP: "No."

JC: "No, I'm a real pussy. I've got a .22 on my balcony and last year we were shooting rabbits, spotlighting. Anyway I've got this rabbit in my sights and he's all crouched down and blinded but he looked so cute I just couldn't do it."

DBR: How many bones have you broken?

DP: "Only one, my collarbone...I have been lucky."

JC: "Oh man, sh*t...let's have a quick count up. It's about 15 bone breaks and 8 dislocations, pretty much top to bottom except my legs."

DBR: It's the last lap, you're in second and right on the leaders' rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

DP: "Yeah, I mean this is motocross, I think every corner anything is possible!"

JC: "It depends on the situation – if it's do or die and it's for a championship then yes but if we're only halfway through the series then no."

DBR: What car do you drive?

DP: "In Italy I drive a Smart car – it is very good, small and easy to park. I also have a van for training and a camper for the races."

JC: "A Hyundai H1."

DBR: And if money was no object?

DP: "I like the new Audi R8 but ideally a Porsche."

JC: "A Lamborghini Gallardo."

DBR: What is your favourite food?

DP: "Pizza and pasta – come on, I am from Italy!"

JC: "Italian. Pasta, pizzas, the way they cook their meat, it's all cool."

DBR: If you weren't a motocrosser what would you be?

DP: "I think I would be a mechanic. I love the relationship the mechanic has with the bike."

JC: "I think I'd be working in a bike shop or running my own shop, maybe property development as well."

DBR: Which is your favourite motocross track?

DP: "St Jean D'Angely."

JC: "Isle of Wight."

DBR: What's your ideal holiday?

DP: "Every year I spend a week up in the snow in the mountains, I like that it is very peaceful."

JC: "It's got to be hot – beach, sun, girls in bikinis, good food, clear water, surf, scuba diving and plenty of sleep."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested and why?

DP: "[Laughs] No, no never, I go very slow in the car."

JC: "No, I came close to it though for speeding."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

DP: "I don't remember, it happened much time!"

JC: "It was at Ben Townley's championship party and I downed this shot of tequila which I spewed out through my nose and all over the bar. The night was over, the room was spinning, done!"

DBR: How many sit-ups can you do?

DP: "I don't know, about 100. I usually just ride the bike and run."

JC: "I'm not sure, I usually do three sets of 30."

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

DP: "Nothing I think."

JC: "I'm scared at the moment of life after motocross. As a motocrosser you get used to a certain lifestyle and income and for me that will be stopping soon so I'm a little bit scared of what life's going to bring. On top of that I'm a bit scared of snakes!"

DBR: Can you cook and what's your signature dish?

DP: "I am good at lasagne – I used to cook for my brothers and sisters when my parents were at work. My girlfriend Alice she is very good."

JC: "Yeah I can cook all right. I do a paella type dish that's made with meat instead of seafood and I also like a good NZ roast or bbq."

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

DP: "Alice!"

JC: "There's a few actually. I have the first motorbike I ever had, I've my two 450 CAS Hondas and my favourite is my '84 Toyota Hiace four-speed that I bought when I was 15 and still use now."

DBR: Favourite race you've been in?

DP: "France 2005 at St Jean D'Angely – in the first MX2 moto I won by 45 seconds so for me it was very good."

JC: "I got smoked but I still enjoyed Japan 2005. There was Everts, Smets, Pichon, Townley and myself and for 20-30 minutes there was no more than one-and-a-half seconds between us."

DBR: Have you ever been in a fight?

DP: "No, never."

JC: "[Laughing] Yeah and I won – and he was bigger than me! It was at Memorial Park after school with a guy when we were about 12. I heard he's in prison now...I must have pushed him over the edge!"

DBR: Who is your sporting hero?

DP: "For sure Valentino Rossi."

JC: "Lance Armstrong and I admire Greg Alberyn."

DBR: Tell us something about yourself that no-one else may have heard about?

DP: "I have a very special training programme that nobody else knows about."

JC: "I have a Triumph 955 Sprint."



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GRAEME WHO?

BLARNEY CELEBRATES THE COMING OF AGE OF ONE OF IRELAND'S HOTTEST YOUNG TALENTS...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Toby Fuller

Unless you eat motocross 24/7 you could be forgiven for not realising that the Graeme in question is none other than the reigning British MX2 champion. The fact that he has previously been known in motocross circles for both his spectacular lap speed and equally spectacular crashes always gave cause for concern.

It was during the Billy Hutton Memorial Motocross run by the Knock club a few weeks ago that, in my eyes at least, Graeme Irwin came of age. The event was the brainchild of Andrew Huddleson and was based around an AMA SX format which saw the entry qualify through heats and semis towards a big money final. With £500 for a win and £300 for second place there was plenty to race for.

Irwin blitzed past Neville Bradshaw on lap one to take the lead which he held until the end, controlling the pace at the front from team-mate Wayne Garrett. There and then I knew the stage was set for a revelation at this year's British championship at Desertmartin.

Eight Irish riders made the cut for the start of the first MX2 race at Desertmartin. The sparse crowd in attendance, due mainly to the bad weather, were treated to something special as Martin Barr and Graeme crossed swords with the UK's finest. Barr, although injured, had worked hard to make this the turning point of his season and a win at home would rekindle his championship aspirations. Only Shaun Simpson aboard his KTM UK machine kept Martin from the top step in race one and for 11 glorious laps Graeme held fourth place. At the flag Martin trailed Shaun by two seconds while Graeme collected a superb sixth with Robert Hamilton 16th and Stuart Edmonds 24th.

Moto two was another Simpson victory with Martin Barr second despite collecting a rock in the face from a lapped rider's back wheel which broke his nose. Irwin made his presence felt at the sharp end again until fatigue took its toll. Still, a 10th place finish and seventh overall was a remarkable result and another points-scoring ride from Hamilton could well sound the return to form while Drew Goudy just missed out on points in 21st.

Inspired by the Irish MX2 riders, Wayne Garrett attacked from the drop of the gate in MX1 and at one stage was running as high as eighth. Four Irish riders finished in the points with Wayne 13th, Richard Bird 15th, Darren Leonard 19th and Stephen Kelly 20th. Cathal Laverty rode a good race to finish 24th while Ross Brown ended his charge into the points when he crashed hard in the whoops section of the demanding Porters Pit circuit.

On the domestic front the In Touch Ulster Premier championship is now at two-thirds distance and is becoming a two-horse race between Garrett and CCM/TM rider Edmonds. Stuart has been a revelation so far this season in both Ulster and Irish championships, taking race wins in both MX1 and MX2.

In the Ulster series both Garrett and Edmonds have recorded five wins apiece with Garrett holding a slender eight-point advantage over Dublin-based Edmonds. RS Freight rider Bird holds third position with a display of steady finishes although on the day he can feel pressure from fourth-placed Gary Gibson.

Gibson and Edward Allingham are the only other two riders to have won a moto so far. Gibson has speed and fitness, if he can add consistency to his armoury he will be a title challenger in the not too distant future. Coming back from a dislocated shoulder is GOMX/JRM Honda rider Mike Sinton – three DNFs have taken their toll and fourth in the championship could be a hard call unless his luck changes.

In the McBurney & Company Solicitors-backed Grade B championship, Michael McCammond's Moto-One by TAS Suzuki is near on 100 points in front of Lisburn rider Neil Campbell. Third place man Wayne Hutchinson

is becoming stronger as the season progresses and Kevin Traynor has taken over fourth place from the recently injured Paul Beattie who fills out the top five.

The all-new Grade C championship is providing some really close racing with six different race winners – this class is as open as the day is long. At the sharp end it was Kyle Farrell-McCauley who took full advantage of the situation as second placed championship rider Steven Arnott DNF'd the first race and GOMX/Moto X Focus-sponsored Mike Huddleson spent most of the day crashing at the Tandragee round. Gavin Jones, flying the Jones Auto Repairs banner aboard his screaming 125 Suzuki, holds down fourth in the points although he may be feeling the heat generated by Jordan Scott. Young Scott has DNF'd four races so far but has hit form recently to win three from four starts – possible championship podium finish?

It must be said that the new layout at Tandragee adds to the already spectacular track and was praised by riders and spectators. Congratulations to the Armagh club and track workers who put in the hours of hard work. And speaking of hard work, it was no accident that the TV crews turned up on Friday evening to pay homage to our sport.

Expect to see more great things this year from Graeme Irwin



In fact, the media and local press were even more evident on race day which was complimented by a great turn-out of spectators. Well done MRA sports development officer Malcolm Beattie.

With August just around the corner, GP fever will soon be in full swing as we race towards the Irish GP on August 30/31. Recent form at the British championship will give much confidence to a few adventurous local riders who will jump into the deepest talent pool in the world. Having the opportunity to take part in your home GP is an honour in itself – yes, it can be a daunting experience when another rider passes you so fast that your grips get sucked off but experience is the key word here.

Barr has not made the grade at GPs this year – there is no hiding place while riding injured at GP level. Will he be fit enough to pull through? Irwin will be up for having a go – that's for sure – but we cannot expect this kid to qualify for his very first GP. Or can we? And what of the Crock Star? Perhaps a few months away from home and riding through forests may have rekindled his hunger to race a GP?

Finally, congratulations Philip and Cherry McCullough on the birth of their twin sons Robbie and Cole. The hybrid McCullough/Lyons racers have both been entered for the forthcoming 2012 Pee Wee Wars (bikes were bought the day after the boys were born – I jest NOT!).

Stevie



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TOO TOUGH?

WITH MANY OF THE ENDURO JUNIOR CLASS RIDERS COMPETING IN THE WEC FINDING EVENTS SIMPLY TOO HARD, JUST HOW DIFFICULT SHOULD WORLD ROUNDS BE FOR THE YOUNGSTERS?

Words and photo by **Jonty Edmunds**

There are many things that make enduro different to pretty much all other forms of off-road motorcycle racing. To start with there's the length of competitions – anything from six hours to six days – and then there's the style of the events – numerous long, relaxed time controls interspersed with chaotic, all-action special stages. And let's not forget that to reach the very top a rider needs to mix skill, speed, stamina and endurance with motocross and trials skills as well as having a sound mechanical knowledge. They also need to be hard as nails.

But with the WEC there are two other things that separate enduro from most other off-road motorcycling world championships – the unusual mix of professionals and amateurs and the inclusion of a junior class for competitors under the age of 23 who compete alongside those in the three senior classes. Some would say such a mix is a recipe for disaster, others would argue that it helps to make the WEC unique – a world championship series in which almost any rider can compete.

There's no denying the fact that mixing amateurs with professionals and inexperienced youngsters with experienced WEC campaigners has caused problems over the years. Trying to cater for riders with hugely differing riding abilities is extremely difficult. How do you challenge the very best without making an event too difficult for those taking their first tentative steps into international enduro competition?

Now is the time the FIM and WEC series promoter Alain Blanchard need to start doing a little more to look after and nurture the Enduro Junior class riders competing in the WEC. At the recent GP of Poland no fewer than 19 EJ riders failed to finish the first day's competition which

no matter how you look at it is too many. WEC events are supposed to be tough but should they be so tough that a large percentage of the enthusiastic youngsters that enter fail to finish?

Running professional, factory-backed riders alongside keen amateurs is something that, as we've established, doesn't happen in every sport. But is it correct to expect the inexperienced younger riders to complete the exact same course that's designed to challenge the E1, E2 and E3 class riders?

For '09 the Enduro Junior class will likely have its upper age limit reduced from 23 to 21 which means the general level of experience and competence in the class will drop. Remembering that the average EJ rider is largely self or family-funded, taking time off work to race each WEC event and looking to enjoy his experience as much as he is to learn from it, surely they can't just be thrown in at the deep end?

The Enduro Junior class is, at most rounds of the WEC, the most popular class which tells us that there is strong interest in enduro among younger riders across Europe. Which is definitely a good thing. Let's not kid ourselves, more often than not simply turning up and competing in the E3 class is all that's needed to score world championship points. But in the EJ class there are often many, many more riders that there are point-paying positions.

Getting it right for our younger riders is hugely important. Not just now but for the sustainable future of enduro sport. While not all of today's youngsters will go on to be superstars, a high percentage of them will compete in the senior ranks of the WEC in the coming years. But only if they enjoy themselves today and become better, faster, more confident riders.

Riding at the back of an international enduro competition is, as every ISDE club team rider will tell you, tough. And riding at the rear of the WEC entry is also hard. Offering an easier course at WEC events isn't an option but there are simple ways of making things a little kinder on EJ riders.

Arguably the hardest part of a modern WEC event is the extreme test – one area where youngsters often see their dreams of competing in the WEC turn into a nightmare. If extreme tests were reserved for E1, E2 and E3 class riders only then the number of Enduro Junior riders finishing events would increase. Instead of asking the younger riders to attempt something that is often way too difficult for many of them, why not allow them to bypass the extreme test, take a break, gather their thoughts and then continue on in the race? Let's not forget these riders and their families are paying for everything themselves and destroyed bikes are an expense they can ill afford.

The WEC needs more youngsters enjoying themselves, finishing races and coming back for more. As I see it if an EJ class is worth including in the WEC it's imperative that thought is given as to why it is included. Competitors in senior classes are there simply to compete against one another and the course to determine who is best. The Enduro Junior class is about more than simply seeing who is the best – it's about challenging Europe's best up-and-coming enduro riders while also providing a class that sits between national competition and senior world championship competition.

If the FIM doesn't do more to consider the needs of the Enduro Junior class riders today it's the World Enduro Championship that will ultimately suffer in the years ahead...



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CASH STRAPPED

First off this magazine is mint but I'm actually writing in about your recent Unsung Heroes article on the fans and Guy Smith's comment that £100 for the day for two was good value for money.

I'm 17, live with my grandparents and everything I do I pay for myself. So let's say it costs me £50 for the day – that's one-and-a-bit practice sessions for someone like me and, let's be serious, the wages for a kid my age are pathetic. So, yes, for a gentlemen like Guy it may be good value and I know there's nothing better than watching the big lads battle it out but I've enough on getting myself to a race meeting or practice session.

I won't get the chance to go watch the pros unfortunately – the closest I'm going to be getting is watching on the TV because it's taken me an age just to save to buy my own bike.

Troy, Chesterfield

Fair point well made Troy – spare change to some is a big chunk of hard-earned to others and getting to the races, paying to get in and then financing a horse burger and chips can be a costly affair so you've got our sympathy mate...

LEFT OUT

I've been wanting a bike for a few years now but I never seem to get one. I'm just wondering how to persuade my mum and dad to get me one and where could I get a second-hand KX80 or 85 for about £500. A few of my mates have got them and I feel left out...

Liam, Bradford

That's a tough one Liam as you know what makes your folks tick better than we do. How about doing jobs around the house? Or what about suggesting a 'bribe' for working hard at school? The good news is that finding a decent second-hand bike shouldn't be too hard – we recommend that you hook up to the bike search on www.dirtbikerider.com or failing that pick up a copy of our sister newspaper Trials and Motocross News and check out the classifieds at the back. Good luck...

HELLO HARRY

Hi, my name is Harry and I love riding motocross and I especially like riding my KTM 85 – when I'm not reading DBR of course. When I'm older I want to be on the Red Bull KTM team like my favourite rider Tommy Searle. Do you think you can get me Tommy's autograph because I think he is the best rider in the world.

Harry, Somerset

Sorted young fella!



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk. All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address. Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

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Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our monthly star prize – this month a pair of Etnies Dainton Calli-slim shoes.

BEGINNER'S PLUCK

First off, thanks for an excellent mag – keep at it! Anyway, I'm 14 and ride a 1995 CR80. A few of my mates ride enduros and I was hoping to join them next season after doing a few track days – however, I've only been ragging my bike around a few fields pulling wheelies and the usual and I'm wondering what will I need to do to start racing?

I mountain bike a lot around forests etc so have a slight advantage but have no experience of doing jumps or drops. I also don't want to just be the idiot going at 5mph around the track getting in everyone's way!

Also, can you recommend any places I can get spares for my CR80 as most companies do parts for 1996+ and I'm needing new plastics and an ignition coil?

Niall, Exeter

You're going to struggle to find an enduro you can enter at 14 on a CR80 in your area but there's plenty of MX action down Exeter way. Have a look at www.acu.org.uk or www.bsmamx.co.uk for clubs local to you and don't worry about wobbling around at the back of the pack – we all have to start somewhere. For a coil try Albion Motorcycles on 01392 260340 and you should be able to get plastics from MD Racing on 01935 429646.

COMING CLEAN

I've just bought a brand new pair of Fox F3 boots. They are great but after my first race in them they have got black stains on them from the gear shifter. Is there any way of avoiding this apart from getting black boots?

Harley, Crawley

Hey Harley, black boots is definitely the way to go but if you can't afford another pair just yet then try using a bit of Cif cleaner on your F3s...

JOE AGAIN

It's Joe again – I wrote to you in April's edition about Mallory Park but this time I want your opinion on what bike I should get because recently I got my '07 KX85 stolen from the shed in my back garden.

Should I get a 250F or a 125 two-smoker? I'm 14, about 5'8" and 11 stone but I'm not fat, I'm just a big lad! I've been riding about two years but I haven't been out on the track in about three months.

Joe, Birmingham

Both bikes have got a long list of merits Joe so it's really a case of what suits you best, two-stroke or four-stroke? Failing that what about a 150cc stroker? They're as light as an 125 but with a little extra attitude...

ARRAN JUMPER

I've just turned 14 and I have a Honda CRF150 which at the moment I only use on practice tracks. I'm thinking about racing but I have no idea how to start or where to begin.

Are there any clubs near me you could find? I only live 20 minutes away from Foxhill and I'm hoping to see round six of the Maxxis championship there. I see kids racing there and would love to be going round with them even though I'm not the best of riders as I don't go out a lot as most practice tracks only open at certain times.

Arran, Swindon

You could do a lot worse than the BSMA's Corsham SSC which is in your neck of the woods – go to www.corshamssc.co.uk for more details. Then there's also the Moredon club which we reckon runs at Foxhill – email chris@churchfarmmonktonfarleigh.co.uk for further info. Whatever happens, the most important thing is that you enjoy yourself Arran so never lose sight of that...

NATS ON THE BOX

I love motocross – there's no doubt about it – and I've been riding now for about seven years but I only started going to tracks about a year ago. Anyway, I'm really pissed off that I can't watch the AMA motocross over here – it's really doing my nut in and instead I have to read up about the events but I'd rather watch them any day. So do you know of any channel that's showing the AMA races?

Richard, Preston

Check out the Motors TV listings as we're sure we've spied some James Stewart action on there...

BROWN FROWN!

I was cruising the internet the other day, logged on to dirtbikerider.com and was gutted to read that Mike Brown has parted company with CAS Honda and gone back to the USA.

Me and my family go to as many British championship rounds as we can and my two boys always want to go straight to the CAS awning in the pits and say 'hi' to Mike and he always finds the time to have a quick chat and autograph whatever they're wearing.

Without Mike at the Maxxis rounds it just won't be the same – on and off the track he's a credit to the sport of motocross and I wish him the best of luck back home with his family in the States.

Pete, Kettering

Can't argue with you Pete – Mike's an awesome rider and a bloody nice bloke n'all and we all wish him well back home...





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MEN'S EYEWEAR

SUNGASSES SPECIAL

MX1.co.uk is one of the most functional and fresh motocross clothing and accessories sales websites out there and to mark the arrival of the summer sun frequently have super deals on sunnies and the like. It's worth checking back there as often as you can because there are big bargains to be had on products like these sexy summer sunnies pictured here.

Starting from the top we have the ubiquitous Fox Median, then the awesomely summery Oakley Orlig, a pair of prison-yard favourites from Fox – The Injection – and last but by no means least a fab pair of Oakley Inmates.

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BRAVE NEW WORLD?

RADICAL, REVOLUTIONARY AND GROUND-BREAKING – OR ALL THE GEAR AND NO IDEA? BMW LAUNCH THEIR G450X IN SOUTHERN SPAIN WHERE DBR TECHNICAL EDITOR GEOFF WALKER'S ON HAND TO FIND OUT IF THE GERMAN GIANT'S OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING ACTUALLY WORKS...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by rayarcher.com



The top brass at BMW must have sat down at the beginning of the G450X concept and asked the question 'how can we make a competitive enduro bike that's nothing like any other on the planet?' And sure enough, as you'd expect from the massive German manufacturer, they've pretty much done exactly that.

This bike really is a break from the normality of today's manufacturers. This is BMW's entry into the 'smaller' competitive enduro bike market and they are aiming to make waves in both manufacture and customer service. I say smaller because as most of you will know they already make large capacity, dirt-compatible bikes as seen on TV in the hands of Dakar riders and globe-trotting movie stars. Could it be possible for BMW to make a bike which could match or even outdo some of the companies who have been making off-road racing bikes since the dawn of time? Surely not at their first attempt! Read on and see... **>>**

bike test

*BMW's G450X
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G450X

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Wheelbase:	Brembo 220mm disc
Seat height:	1475mm
Dry weight:	955mm
	111kg



The air intake is mounted high up away from water and flying crud – good job too!

I have to say I was pretty excited about getting my hands on the new Beemer for the day's riding in the mountains of southern Spain and after a little bit of playing hard to get (a long story but it involves leaving my driving licence at home and a spot of seemingly unbending officialdom) I had my hands and ass on it!

At this point I will explain the spec of bike for the test. There were three stages to the test bike – a completely standard set-up which includes the standard silencer with catalytic converter, the mid-version with the competition silencer producing around 41 ponies and finally the full-power set-up knocking out approx 51HP. The full-power version is only an electronic chip connection away and the BMW technical guys were switching the bikes to full power in seconds. I spent most of the day on the 41HP set-up as this is what most people will run in the UK.

Having spoken briefly to one of the men responsible for testing the bike and one of the nice guys in our sport – Joel Smets – it was clear that the BMW was a bike which needed a settling in period with each individual rider. On my road ride to the enduro loops further along the mountain I had a feeling of happiness and strangeness. The bike felt pretty soft in its power

delivery and I felt like I was sitting about six inches above where I wanted to be...

The handlebars and sitting position felt wrong and I had to have a moment of thought when I got to the off-road HQ for the day. What was giving me the strange feeling? After some thought I figured out that the feeling I was getting was from the rear end of the bike. I didn't want to change the bike massively as this is a test on the bike as it should come out of the box. I simply set the sag which EVERYONE should do before they ride seriously off-road and softened the compression damping and opened the rebound clicker, both by five clicks. That was the only chassis change I made to the bike and it was like getting onto a different vehicle. With the rear shock brought to life I could head off into the rocks, roots, rivers and ravines and get a true test of the bike under way!

I reckoned from the look and design of the bike that it would be critical to find the balance across the chassis to gain the best performance and I was right. If you rode this bike badly set up you would want to go for an early bath – get it dialled in and you would be able to push on for the day. This bike is a racer and I'm not going to make out it is the ultimate 'soft' trail bike. This

thing wants and needs to be ridden at a good level to get the best from its design.

Within 20 minutes on our first ride out we were at a small special test. The bike gave me instant confidence on the baked, slick surface to push hard. The front end of this bike only runs with 45mm Marzocchi forks but the chassis design has these forks punching above their weight and size and although they are probably a little over-damped for most normal sized riders I liked the positive feel from them.

The bike has a front end which seems glued to the track – it is a really strange feeling to go into a turn and know that the front wheel is not going to push away or tuck under. I have never had more instant confidence in the front of a bike before. The rear end of the bike works as designed with great traction in mind but I did get a few spring back kicks from it at higher speeds. A little more fettling with the shock should settle this down and more time spent on the bike made this behaviour easier to read. The rear of the bike needs to stay loaded so riding with weight back makes for a smoother day in the saddle.

Talking of the saddle, it is one seriously hard unit. The overall seating position has an 'up top' feeling. This would take a bit of getting >>



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FRESH THINKING!

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

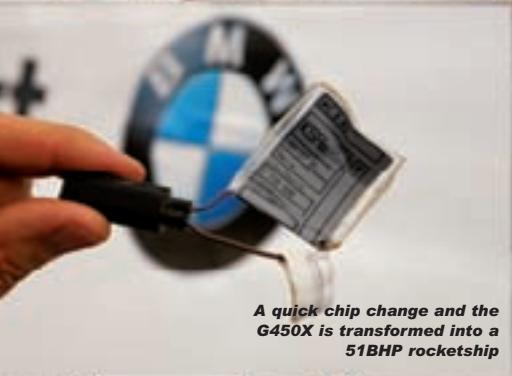
BMW seem to have taken an aggressive view to the build and design of the new bike in both concept and environmental issues. The bike is fuel-injected and has a computer-controlled three-way catalytic converter which makes the bike Euro III-homologated for emissions. The look of the standard bike will not suit everyone's taste but if I'm honest I don't think BMW are trying to win an aesthetic battle. They have gone for clean lines and simplicity in the looks department – I don't think it looks great in standard trim but the factory bikes on display step it up and look really pleasing.

The air intake is high at the front of the bike's seat so water and crud are kept well away. The positioning of the engine allows for the intake tract to be straighter allowing for more power to the DOHC motor. The whole concept of the bike is to make the chassis and motor act as one unit. This may sound obvious but with the BMW it seems that every part is designed to fit perfectly along the design line to make every section of the bike blend together. The frame is different to all others as it is designed to keep the centre of gravity as low as possible.

One of the biggest differences in this bike's design is the fact that the final drive sprocket is in line with the swingarm pivot. This coaxial mount allows the engine to be placed further back which in turn allows the cylinder to be placed at the correct angle for optimum intake. The swingarm can also be longer making for more traction which is important in the enduro world. Another key to this positioning is the constant chain length. There is no slackening and tightening of the chain through the pivotal movement of the swingarm which makes for reduced stress and fatigue on the chain and also has a positive effect on the handling.

Another unconventional design is the location of the 8.5 litre fuel tank under the seat. The fuel cap is in the seat. Weird but good for maintaining a low centre of gravity. The seat itself is a one-piece moulded unit with no cover to save weight. The electric starter is positioned at the front of the engine and the battery is up in the upper triangle of the frame well out of the way of debris.

The compact clutch is positioned directly onto the end of the crankshaft allowing the engine to sit into the unique frame design easily due to the bottom half of the engine being quite small and compact. The five-speed motor hangs from the frame rather than the traditional 'cradle' design and runs with a tight fitting, heavy duty guard. The motor is lubricated by two oil pumps – one pressure pump and one suction pump – and the oil capacity is approximately one litre. Because of the frame and engine design the cooling is taken care of via one large radiator which has a cooling fan attached for extreme situations.



A quick chip change and the G450X is transformed into a 51BHP rocketship



used to if you were jumping straight off a Japanese bike as you sit 'in' most of them. There is a stepped seat available which allows you to sit a little further into the bike but as a taller rider, once used to the high-feeling seat it was no problem to run as it calls for less leg power to move from a seated position to a standing one.

The Brembo brakes on the BMW work as well as every other bike out there. Brakes are a no-brainer these days as the technology and materials used by the manufacturers make it easy to buy the units in for production bikes and the braking power is guaranteed.

Clutch pull on the bike is quite heavy and after a long day in the saddle on technical going you could have a bit of finger fatigue. The cable-operated clutch would need a well lubed-cable and lever point to keep an easy feel to the operation.

The motor in its Euro III environmentally-friendly state is a surprise package. It still has ample power for every situation and the smoothness level is there for all standard of rider.

With just a tailpipe change the power is increased considerably from mid-thirties to around 41HP. This really brings the motor to life but not in an overly aggressive way. The power delivery is still smooth for a 450 and traction is easy to find all through the range. Then with a swift side scoop movement and chip connection fiddling – WHAM! – 51HP and another increase in power. The final stage takes the bike up another level as torque is increased and more feedback is given from the bike as speed increases.

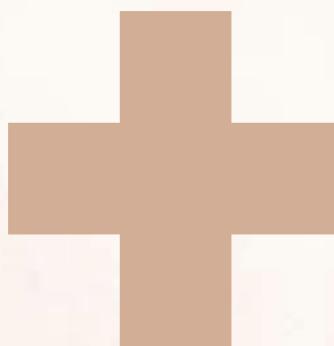
I personally liked the middle setting as the motor behaved very friendly in the rocky Spanish going. For a fast three-hour race or motocross the 51HP setting would be the choice.

So there it is, the BMW G450X. A bike which I never thought would reach production is arriving in the UK in September with a price tag of £5595. And BMW have strived to go their own way with new concepts and design which should make the G450X a top contender in sales and performance in this competitive class of bike.



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125/150SX

KTM's little 125 has been at the top of its class for some time now so it's always a pleasure for me to ride. This year I wasn't expecting any changes or any major developments, just a few minor tweaks – stickers and plastics etc – but how wrong I was.

The bike feels a bit stronger than last year which is a shock. The motor's so strong coming out of turns it sometimes feels more like it's over-bored than a genuine 125 – it's really responsive and the bottom-end hits with a mega punch. The 39mm carb from '08 is replaced by a 38mm Keihin for '09 which is more suited to the average rider and I prefer it too as you don't have to ride the bike as hard and the power is ready and waiting.

The mid-range power picks up where the bottom-end leaves off and is just what you need coming out of faster turns or when you get yourself in a bit of trouble and need some extra braaap on tap.

The track was a good test for the motor with no shortage of places to try out the top-end. This bike pulls so hard and even when I tried to get it to bog on the landing of the jumps it just wasn't having it. Not once did this motor even think about dying on me.

The chassis feels the same as last year, as do all the controls and also the riding position is pretty much identical.

The 150 sees all the same changes as the 125 – and the same benefits too. The new 38mm carb is more noticeable on the bottom-end and for me the 150 is a total weapon – and anyone who disagrees is either a liar or needs a diagram showing them the difference between their arse and their elbow.

125/150SX

Capacity: 124.8/143.6cc

Bore and stroke:

54mm x 54.5mm/56mm x 58.5mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Carburettor: Keihin PWK-S 38AG

Front suspension: WP USD

48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS

(335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1471mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 91kg

TOOM ARMY!

KTM LET RIP WITH THEIR 2009 RANGE OF MX, ENDURO AND XC MACHINES IN SWEDEN WHERE DBR'S CRACK CRASH TEST MONKEYS ARE ON HAND TO RIDE, RAG AND RATE THE BRAND-NEW TOOMERS...

Words by Tony Marshall and Geoff Walker Photos by Jonty Edmunds and Redeye

When it comes to all things off-road KTM are the undisputed European heavyweights and the Austrian marque have beaten the Japanese Big Four to the punch once again in the new-bike launch stakes.

KTM unveiled their 2009 Orange Army at the end of June in Sweden at the awesome motorsports facility just outside Linkoping, home of the Saab aircraft department. We sent Tony Marshall along to ride and rate the new MXers while Geoff Walker was given the task of evaluating the enduro machines.

Over to you Tone...>>

250SX
Capacity: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 66.4mm x 72mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin PWK 36SAG
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 985mm
Weight: 95kg



250SX

What a bike! If you'd said to me a few years ago that the bike I felt most comfortable riding was a 250 two-stroke I would never have believed you. The 250cc had always been a handful for me and not that much fun but on this evidence I'd say the '09 quarter-litre machine has got to be the ultimate clubman bike.

Before the new wave of four-strokes came along all the manufacturers were turning out hard-hitting two-stroke 250s which were hard to ride and took all the fun out of the job for the average punter. This bike has such smooth power you sometimes think it's slow but it's not and I could ride the bike harder and there didn't seem to be any waste of power – it felt like the rear wheel was making full use of all the ponies on offer.

Out of the crate this bike is so suited to my riding style. The jetting is very slightly on the rich side which also flattens out the power a bit which I find makes it easier to ride, especially on the type of ground we tested on – hard underneath but loose on top. I could be a little more aggressive with this bike and take a few liberties – and get away with them – which in the past was never the case with a 250 two-stroke.

With it being a bit rich on the jetting it felt like it needed the needle dropping by one to sharpen it up but it was a lot of fun riding this round this hard but loamy track. Coming into the turns it's really stable and when hitting braking bumps the rear end stays on line and I never felt like I was fighting it. The front forks felt like they were packing and not returning quick enough so I stiffened the forks up, adjusted the rebound and this was history. With five bikes to test you don't always get the chance to play with the settings too much but the changes really worked well.

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250SX-F

I personally like the look of the KTM four-bangers but there's one thing I would do if I had a 250F or 450F in my garage and that's bin the handguards! They may be handy on a stony track but I think they look very Euro and I hate them.

The 250F was the bike I was most looking forward to riding out of the four-strokes and I wasn't disappointed once I'd turned a few laps and got a feel for the 2009 model. The rear shock soaks up hard landings with complete ease and under power it tracks in a straight line without the rear ever really feeling like it wants step out. I did have a few moments over braking bumps when the rear wanted to kick me but I didn't need to change any settings, just my riding position. I moved my bodyweight back a little so it was more central and the kicking stopped immediately which let me carry more speed into the turns.

The front end of this bike is so well balanced with the rear and when cornering it's very positive going into, through and exiting turns. There were a couple of times I didn't think I was going to get onto the line I was aiming for – let alone hold it around the turn – but it never let me down. This bike really does make it feel easy. Put simply the 250F puts the fun back into riding for me.

The motor didn't feel any stronger from last year, just a bit more responsive which I could mostly feel on the bottom. It's really torquey so there's plenty of power even when I was a bit lazy with the gearbox at times and should have been down a gear. And that's the big plus over the 125 – if you mess up halfway through a turn there's no panic to go down through the box and get the revs up.

With the layout of this track it gave a good test of how strong this bike really does pull and landing from the fast jumps was such a good test for the four-bangers as the revs can die or bog on landing. The KTM hasn't done this for a few years now – they really do seem to have this right.

The brakes work so well but what else would you expect from a company like Brembo? The partnership between the brakes and front forks works like the perfect marriage with such a progressive feel.

KTM really do bolt on some nice bits and the hydraulic clutch is a stand-out part – I really don't understand why the Japanese have not looked into this. I just love the way the lever feels and works and I have never lost any adjustment or sensed any sign of fading. The bite is spot on and the whole thing just has a nice and easy feel to it.

250SX-F

Capacity: 248.6cc

Bore and stroke: 76mm x 54.8mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX 39

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 98kg



450SX-F

The test of this bike gets off to a great start – thanks to the electric start (boom, boom)! No wasting energy to get this baby fired up. Restarting from a crash and trying to get a hot 450 fired back up has tended to be a big problem but the electric boot works really well and didn't miss a beat all day. Just need to remember to stick it on charge after your day's riding!

A full-on 450 is a bit of a handful – a proper man's bike – and with the test track really loose and hard I was dreading my time fighting to keep the rear end under control. It took a few laps before I stopped expecting the rear end to break free from underneath me and realised that all this bike wants to do is track with the rear working brilliantly with the front coming out of turns. The riding position feels very similar to the 250 and fitting Renthal bars as stock speaks for itself.

The front forks have a really nice feel to them – no stiff part of the stroke, just very progressive feel – although there were a couple of times when I thought I had bottomed them out as I felt I was using most of the travel. The WPs work so good coming into the turns – not once did it feel like the front wheel wanted to break away from underneath me on this hard ground. Just as with the rest of the range the rear shock soaked up everything I could throw at it and exiting turns and hitting rough sections there was no need to come off the gas to let the bike straighten itself up.

This motor has no silly hard-hitting punch from the bottom-end which makes it so nice to ride and a lot of fun for a 450. I didn't find myself fighting with the bike to keep it under control, instead I just enjoyed the very progressive power. Mid-range was maybe a bit more aggressive and while still very useable called for a little more respect. And the 450 certainly doesn't lack power on the top-end – there was loads to spare and all of it was well outside my comfort zone.



450SX-F

Capacity: 449.3cc

Bore and stroke: 97mm x 60.8mm

Transmission: Four-speed

Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX 41

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

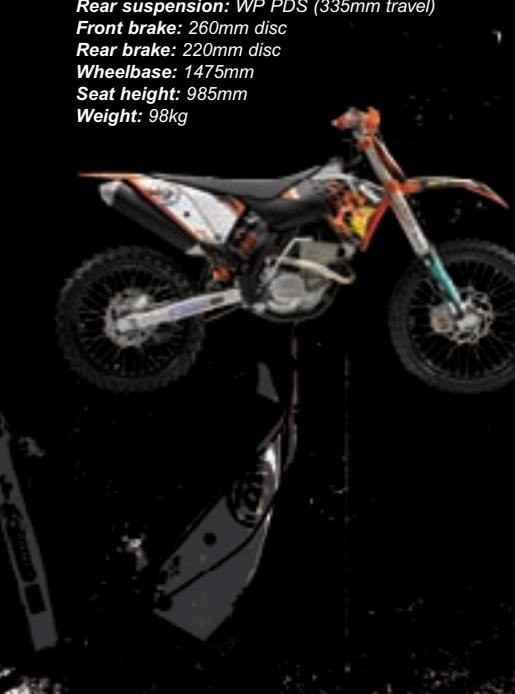
Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 104kg



125EXC

With the baby of the bunch getting a new cylinder to improve low-down power as well as a new piston I was looking forward to taking this little ripper onto the track. The bike is fun and although it is improved in the power department I have to take it on the chin that I am just too big a lump for this little bundle of joy!

The bike cries out to be ridden fast and aggressive but it still responded pretty well to my excess weight. The light feeling to the bike makes you think it can be simply picked up and carried. It really does feel that light. Rock steps and technical sections are a breeze on the 125 and when it was time to cut it loose it wanted to rev to the moon. I'm sure it was laughing at my grimace as I let it rev.

This bike loves to be caned and it was awesome to hear that pure crisp note as it whipped along. Wind it up and cut it loose, this little bike has speed beyond its cubes!

125EXC

Capacity: 124.8cc

Bore and stroke: 54mm x 54.5mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Carburettor: Keihin PWK 36SAG

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1471mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 97kg



250EXC

Having spent a fair bit of time on two fiddly two-strokes it was no surprise to find the 250EXC handled the enduro loop with no worries. The power delivery on the bike lets you know that you have to be fairly serious about your sport to make the best of the motor.

With two different exhaust control springs provided with the bike and the dual ignition the bike can be tamed but the fun with this bike is its feedback to the rider. It wants to be ridden hard and whether it is set on its softest power setting or most aggressive set-up, the motor and chassis combination make you want to go faster in all situations.

The electric start system which is used on the 300EXC is available to retro fit onto the 250. I believe Juha Salminen used this set up at Erzberg this year so it comes as a pretty highly recommended hop-up for the 250EXC.

250EXC

Capacity: 249cc

Bore and stroke: 66.4mm x 72mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Carburettor: Keihin PWK 36SAG

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 101kg

Walker gives it big licks on the 250EXC



300EXC

The daddy of enduro bikes at the moment? Ask Samuli Aro. The Finnish fun guy is leading the world on one and talking to him about the bike he is certain it is helping him to his healthy results even with the horrific finger injury he suffered a short time ago.

The 300 comes with the electric start as standard for '09 as well as the switchable ignition and exhaust control spring choice. All this coupled with a chassis which I found to be massively improved by the new front forks and rear shock action make this bike hard to beat. The power delivery in every form is useable and user-friendly. Rolling on the power in every condition I found the 300 to behave and hook up creating awesome forward motion even across the large outcrops of rocks and the flat grassy turns. There is absolutely no break in the linear power to interrupt a power slide or cause a dip when shifting gears in tough going.

The torque produced by this bike is a rider and a racer's dream. Light, useable, comfortable, smooth and blindingly fast when required. What a bike...

300EXC

Capacity: 293.2cc

Bore and stroke: 72mm x 72mm

Transmission: Five-speed

Carburettor: Keihin PWK 36SAG

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 103kg



250EXC-F

The smallest of the four-strokes receives a few changes for '09 which include new camshafts aimed at providing another boost in bottom-end power and to make the bike more responsive while the titanium valves have new springs and valve guides which allow for less moving mass and maximum valve lift. The gearbox also gets a beef-up on the shifting gear for third and fourth gears and a modified idler gear for third gear means the durability is improved.

The bike is probably the easiest bike in the entire range to just jump on and ride. It is soft in its delivery and as each year passes in this new era of the 250EXC-F it seems to become lighter in its overall ride feel and more powerful and free-revving. The test bike felt great in all but one situation – it didn't like being loaded from a slow turn in a high gear. This would cause a cut out so as a quick fix I simply turned the idle up a little on the carb. This eased the problem but a small jetting change coupled with a race exhaust would bring this bike out kicking and screaming.

There is nothing wrong with the power delivery and once the bike was above the first eighth of the throttle movement it would kick on and go. My time on the loop was pretty fast on the 250F and although not quite as quick as the 300 and 530, I was a lot fresher after the laps on the little bike.

250EXC-F

Capacity: 248.6cc
Bore and stroke: 76mm x 54.8mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX 39
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 985mm
Weight: 106kg



200EXC

The 200 never fails to bring a smile to a rider's face and my comedy Oirish cheeks do tend to head north when I get the chance to cut loose on one.

The 200 shares the newly-developed Magura clutch master cylinder and flex lever with the 125 as well as the higher efficiency intake flange and switchable ignition which appears on all the two-strokes. The 200EXC just feels right and I found the improvements in these details give the bike a faster and more positive feel over the differing conditions of the track. The bike stayed true and the light feel it shares with the 125 makes it a much easier bike to ride for me.

The extra smooth power from the early revs make pick-up out of every turn just a fraction quicker than the 125 when in my hands while the roll-on power makes the 200 an excellent bike for trail riders and those humans looking for a confidence-inspiring bike. This bike does nothing scary and with the smooth roll-on power it will help find grip in most conditions.

200EXC

Capacity: 193cc
Bore and stroke: 64mm x 60mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin PWK 36SAG
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1471mm
Seat height: 985mm
Weight: 97kg



400EXC

The new/old kid on the block is back by popular demand. The 400 was a long-time favourite for trail riders and racers due to its easy and ample power and smooth delivery.

The 400 was missing from the range when the new SOHC engine was launched on the EXC bikes last year but KTM have developed the 400 engine to give a super-friendly power coupled with easy handling. The motor differs from the 450 and 530 by way of a shorter stroke, a new camshaft and ignition map. The 400, like the other bigger bikes, benefits from a modified and improved auto decompression system which along with the new cold start setting helps with starting in all conditions. The two separate oil circuits in the motor keep the gearbox and clutch oil separate from the combustion tract oil, the clutch is also improved with more oil flow through the outer hub and uprated clutch plates.

The 400 is a joy on the test. The power is nicely delivered and would be easy to handle for every level of rider. The power is inspiring and the new front forks really start to come into their own on the bigger four-strokes. The plusher feeling eases fatigue and this works really effectively on the 400 as the power allows you to ride easier for longer.

400EXC

Capacity: 393.4cc
Bore and stroke: 95mm x 55.5mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX 39
Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 985mm
Weight: 114kg

The 300EXC is just about the best two-stroke enduro bike on the planet at the moment

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450EXC

The 450 was a pleasant surprise for me at this test as I am not a massive fan of the 450cc power delivery on most bikes. I normally find them difficult to manage when it comes to general grip and keeping the power going to the ground. The '09 450 KTM is by far the most mellow KTM motor they have produced in as much as the delivery is smoother and lighter in feel to any of the previous 450cc bikes I have tested before from the marque. With this power delivery all the best traits from the bike can come to the surface.

The seating and standing position on the 450 and the rest of the bikes is roomy and comfortable and the bodywork helps you grip the bike with your legs, making your arms and body less fatigued. Turning on the 450 is improved by the power delivery and the grip from the tyres makes life easy. This motor still delivers a punch in the woods but for '09 that punch is more of a love tap than a knockout.

450EXC

Capacity: 449.3cc

Bore and stroke: 95mm x 63.4mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX 39

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 114kg



530EXC

Less is more? More is more? I am going with the latter. When it comes to a great power delivery KTM seem to have things under control with their biggest capacity motor – the 530EXC-F runs with a 510cc engine and this big boy delivers.

For a big bike the 530 has the feel of something smaller and with the improvement in the suspension becoming more noticeable as the size of the bike increases, I found the 530 to handle and turn incredibly well. The going on the loop made for a fully focussed ride and hitting every rock and root the 530 pushed its way through the tougher stuff. The chassis improvements really do work well on the '09 models and the 530 proved this to me as I have been spending a bit of time on the '08 model lately.

530EXC

Capacity: 510.4cc

Bore and stroke: 95mm x 72mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Carburettor: Keihin FCR-MX 39

Front suspension: WP USD 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (335mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc

Rear brake: 220mm disc

Wheelbase: 1475mm

Seat height: 985mm

Weight: 114kg

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!

KTM GIVE YOU MORE...

Sales are going strong in the enduro market and KTM are embracing this with more enduro bikes being produced than motocross machines. The total range for enduro and XC racing from KTM for '09 is 15 different production bikes! Mahooosive! These consist of eight EXC models including the all-new 400, six EXC Six Days Specials (125, 250, 300 two-stroke and 250, 450, 530 four-stroke) and the new 505 XC-F.

Some of the changes for '09 are implemented across the entire range of bikes. The front forks are still open cartridge units but the cartridge is new and the inner and outer tubes are also new along with the bearing seat for the slide bush. These changes are aimed at making the fork work in a smoother way. As well as these internal changes the rebound adjuster on the top of the fork is a new star-shaped unit which makes for easier adjustments.

The rear shocks have a stronger PDS needle and the second piston is redesigned to make the damping action more user-friendly.

There are plastic frameguards fitted to protect the powder-coated frame tubes from boot wear. The look for '09 has changed with the move to more black on the rad scoops. All engine covers have a new coating with a different colour and are apparently stronger. A new 'no return' valve is fitted to the fuel breather pipe and the new seat has been made stronger, is 150gm lighter and also more comfortable.

The Six Days specials are available for the first time to normal customers who want something a little different without having to go through the pain of six days of competition in Greece! These specials feature a different seat cover, dual-metal Stealth rear sprocket, engine guards, transparent fuel tank, machined triple clamps, PHDS damped handlebar clamps, handguards, fork bleed vents, frame guards, quick-change front spindle insert and, of course, the Six Days graphics kit.



More is more when it comes to the 530EXC





Josh started the season as favourite but has struggled to match his team-mate's pace



It's comparatively rare that two team-mates go head-to-head for the world title but that's the prospect this summer as pre-season hot favourite Josh Coppins gets his campaign back on track after a painful start to the year while Monster Yamaha colleague David Philippaerts has held down the red plate since round three.

DBR talked to both potential champs as well as their boss Michele Rinaldi about this unusual situation as the season heads towards a critical phase.

"We have in theory two riders who can challenge for the title but it is too early now, way too early," insists Rinaldi. "We have two very strong riders, at least I hope so. Josh is a little bit behind David at the moment but in theory he should be the one going for the title and I am expecting him to start doing good soon."

And the 49-year-old Italian is well aware that the scenario requires delicate handling, particularly with the likes of Ramon and POURCEL waiting for their chance to come up on the rails.

"This situation is not 100 per cent luxury but for sure it more than 50 per cent, it is better than to have two riders running eighth and ninth. You have to learn how to work with and support both riders, how to motivate both riders and how to keep good relations between them.

"The best way for the team to handle it is to support both riders to the maximum and they have to feel this but it is delicate. They have to feel well supported for every opportunity, for every race, for every chance. We are here to support the riders and give them the possibility to exploit their skills.

"But there is a day – a day which has not yet arrived this year – when you have to look at the situation practically but at the same time still have a good relation with both riders, to let them understand that you are doing everything for each of them. But you cannot force this, they have to feel it themselves. You have to handle it delicately." >>

CIVIL WAR?

ONE'S THE PRE-SEASON FAVOURITE, THE OTHER'S THE CHAMPIONSHIP LEADER. BOTH RIDE FOR MONSTER YAMAHA. SO JUST HOW HARD IS LIFE UNDER THE SAME AWNING FOR JOSH COPPINS AND DAVID PHILIPPAERTS?

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

Coppins and Philippaerts – team-mates and rivals...





And after the Yamaha riders clashed during the opening moto of the campaign at Valkenswaard in Holland, the tender touch has been called for from day one.

"Valkenswaard is water under the bridge, it was already the same evening," insists Coppins. "Obviously, I was disappointed at the time, only because we had had a meeting the evening before to discuss passing team-mates. When we touched I thought 'what the hell, I thought we just talked about this'."

"But generally we get on fine. David doesn't speak that much English and now we are both going for the championship it makes it a little bit harder. The hardest thing with David is racing on the track. He is very, very aggressive – basically an MX2 style and I'm not used to that."

"And Valkenswaard is not the only time we made contact this year. We came together at Mantova at the start of the year and we touched in Portugal at corners three and four. I just need to adjust my riding around him and as soon as I feel a bit more confident, a bit fitter and a bit faster I should be able to handle it. I had it very easy last year with Marc [De Reuver] but it is a different situation. Marc was never there to go for the title, David came to Rinaldi to be a contender."

And Philippaerts' angle? Open and friendly off the track – his communication only blunted slightly as he comes to terms with the English language – he's a racer through and through once he puts on his helmet, boots and gloves. "Josh switched to a faster line than lap, I was coming fast from the outside and we touched. Both of us could have crashed, it was just one of those things which neither of us wanted but they happen sometimes. That's motocross."

Coppins is the first to admit that '08 has not gone the way he planned. "So far the year has been absolute crap. It's unbelievable that I'm running third to be honest. I'm lucky that we're not back in the day with Everts, Pichon or Smets because they would have crucified me, I would have been 100 points from them by now and screwed."

"Already in the first four international races I was riding with an injured shoulder after landing on it at Mantova, then I had some time off to rest it followed by three days riding before I had a week off for the Monster photo shoot, then I injured my toe and had another two weeks off so I had three days riding in the five weeks leading up to Valkenswaard. I was lucky that the bike was good from day one and I didn't have so much work to do. If it had been my first year on Yamaha it would have been really difficult."

"I'm not even thinking about the championship at the moment or even the result this weekend. I'm just trying to ride better and trying to enjoy it because I haven't enjoyed a race this year yet, not one. I've been in pain all the time and haven't been riding well. I'll be the first to admit that I have struggled to adapt to David's style, I've struggled to adapt to having an Italian team-mate in an Italian team, I've struggled because I haven't been able to go and do the work I need to."

"I'm the type of person who, when I arrive at a race, needs to know that I am ready to win and that hasn't happened yet this year. It is very hard for me to leave home for a race knowing that I am not ready to win. That's been the hardest part and that is why I haven't enjoyed it."

So what's Josh's take on the way Team Rinaldi is handling the situation of having two riders chasing the title?

"It is more difficult with two top riders because it's an Italian team and David is Italian. The team is always very conscious to ensure that there is no bias towards either rider but obviously when we do anything as a team it's easier for David to interact."

"I'm lucky I'm not a young rider. If we were two young riders after what happened in Valkenswaard I'd say there would have been a lot of stress already but because of my experience I'm able to understand that I'm getting what I want from the team and I need to keep a clear head through it all. And if I get what I need I believe I can do the job. I just



IN STEFAN'S SHOES...

HOW WOULD THE RECORD CHAMP REACT?

"Stefan made sure he never had this situation. He made sure they always hired a rider who wasn't going to give him that pressure and as soon as Melotte started winning races and they had a few coming together at internationals Stefan was fist on the table," insists Coppins. "Michele will never admit that there was a number one and a number two and there was never a number two in the team as far as the support was concerned but Stefan never had to race his team-mate for the title."

"I made the situation aware to Michele after Valkenswaard. I asked him 'what would Stefan have done?' Michele started stuttering 'different situation' and I said 'No'. What I wanted to say was that I reacted professionally and kept my mouth shut. Stefan would not have done that. Remember SA and be aware of how well I handled it."

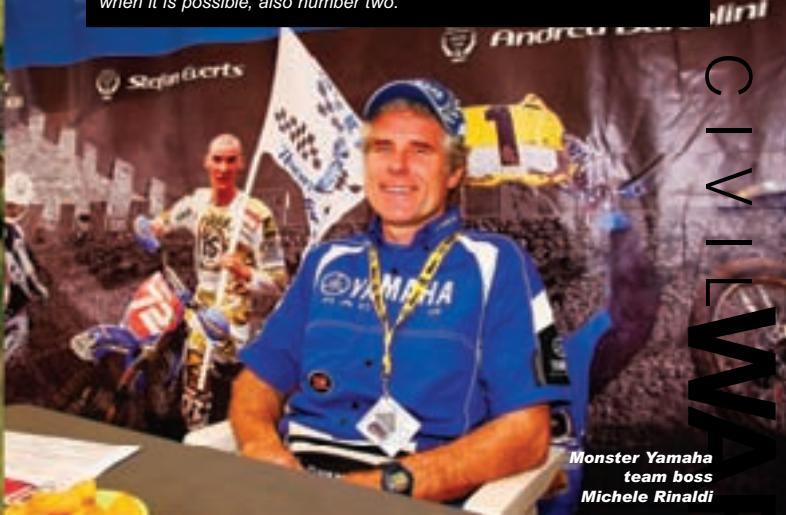
"At the time of Stefan he was always number one because he was always doing better than his team-mate," explains Rinaldi diplomatically. "I can tell you that we spent more time with Cedric Melotte and Brian Jorgensen and Marnicq Bervoets when they were team-mates to Stefan because we know that is important to support even more the rider in the team who needs assistance. Sometimes it was more psychological support. Having Stefan as a team-mate was not easy, we understood that."

"You have to look at the two sides of the coin and for sure a manager can make a lot of difference when he has two top riders in the team. When I was a rider in 1983 at Suzuki, Sylvain Geboers was the manager, Eric my team-mate. I had a fantastic season, never a problem with either of them. I did my best and I felt I could win until I hurt my knee again. It was a fantastic season. My team-mate was doing better than me but he was a very sportive person and we had a fantastic relationship, all three of us. I know from that time how good the situation within a team can be."

"That is why I always supply the same parts, the same support, the same material to all of my riders whether they are Italian or not, friend or not, whether they are leading the series or having a difficult time, since that time I learnt that this is the best for the riders. We want to win and, when it is possible, also number two."

© Sutty

Philippaerts feels right at home on the Italian team and it shows in his results



Monster Yamaha
team boss
Michele Rinaldi

need to sort myself out."

David too knows what he has found with his winter switch to Yamaha. "It was like a dream come true. Rinaldi Yamaha is not just THE team in Italy, it is THE best team in the world. You just look at the record – six titles in a row with Stefan. And Michele is the reason the team is so strong. He is the best manager in the world, he is the reason that everyone in the team wants everything to be perfect and everyone in the team lives for motocross. I have been in some good teams but the team spirit at Rinaldi is the best I have ever known."

"My day-to-day partner is Mino [racing manager Massimo Raspanti]. We speak every day about the bike, the race, everything for the moment and the race. But Michele is there before and after the race, discussing the approach to the race and how it has gone. It is also a real bonus for me to be in the team with Josh. He has been in the GPs for 15 years and I can feed off his experience. For several years when I was in small teams I was very fast but I had no experience."

"I have learnt to be more mature. I changed the team and I changed the mentality. This is where you can see how much Michele has helped me so much at the start of the year. In the years before I wanted to push very hard in every race. I don't think this was wrong at the time and at KTM Georges Jobe helped me to advance. That was important then but now I have learnt to be more quiet, to think more. It is only when you have reached the level I am now that you understand how important this is."

"In Bulgaria I would have liked to score 50 points and I pushed for several laps to try to catch Barragan in the second race but I saw that he was also having a very good race. I would have needed to ride over the top to catch him and perhaps I would have thrown away everything. The Yamaha has helped me very much to achieve this – it handles >>



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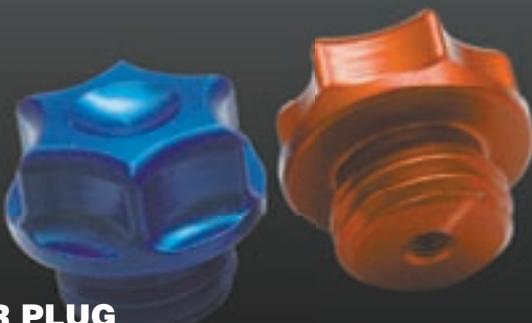


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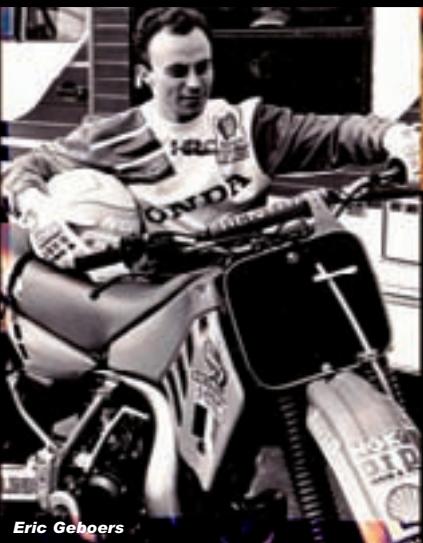
FRIEND OR FOE?

FAMOUS INTER-TEAM RIVALRIES

There have been several occasions when team-mates have taken the world title to the wire.

The longest running internal conflict was between Joel Robert and Sylvain Geboers – first with CZ, then on Suzuki. Robert, already champion in 1964, became a legend with five straight titles between 1968 and 1972. Geboers was runner-up in 1969 and 1970 and three times third but never champion after bitter defeats in 1969 and 1970 when, leading at the start of the day, Sylvain suffered DNFs at the final round each time!

The next Suzuki struggle came in '76 when Roger De Coster outstayed Gerrit Wolsink's mid-season roll to win his fifth and final title and in the '80s HRC domination gave us the titanic struggles between David Thorpe and first Andre Malherbe, later Eric Geboers. David lost to Eric when he got hurt in 1988 but the Brit demoralised the Belgian one year later and won last moto deciders against Malherbe in 1985/86.



Eric Geboers



Sutty
©

much more like a 250, so light. I can ride so smoothly now. I think sometimes I do not look fast but I am."

David appreciates the native Italian aura in the Parma squad but knows too that the desire to win crosses frontiers. "It's quite ironic that my mechanic Gerard Wever is not Italian – only he and Josh in the team are not – but he is a very good mechanic. We have a good relationship and he is a strong mechanic. I never had a single problem, not the slightest thing."

Considering his healthy points lead in the series Philippaerts is not at all cocky about the situation. "Of course I am happy to have the red plate and to have defended it but so much can happen and I don't want to shout my mouth off. It's going good for me at the moment but we will see. It is a long season and I think Josh will be the most consistent over the entire year."

"I think he is still the leading candidate for the title – when we get to the last GP I think he will be in front. Of course it is possible for me and the team does everything possible for both of us all of the time."

Coppins doesn't hide his respect for his team-mate either. "He's listening closely to the team. That's smart, very smart. They know what problems I have had and not just Michele, also Mino, are advising him a lot. David's confidence is very high at the moment whereas mine is down compared with what it was at this time last year. It will be interesting to see what happens when the tables have turned because they will turn at some stage and it will be interesting to see how he reacts to that. When I can race with him I think we will see some good battles but at the moment he's just faster than me everywhere."

"David and Steve [Ramon] are the ones I have to beat. Steve's always going to be consistent but as soon as I start to win I'm going to drop him because thirds and fourths are not going to win the title again. But that's what I'm getting too at the moment. They're just not good enough, you have to start winning. I need to concentrate on my riding and put some 1-1s together."

"Fortunately for me, apart from David everyone is doing exactly the same as last year. I expected a lot of different winners and there have been with a different winner at every race. I'm trying not to focus on David although I think he's going to be the guy I have to beat for the championship."

"But I think he will start making mistakes when the pressure grows. Even last year, when I had a much bigger lead than David, I started to struggle from about the seventh GP. I was in No Man's Land, I was too far ahead to look back, it was hard to keep looking forward and I started thinking about the championship rather than the races. That's the sort of pressure he's going to come under soon."

PRECIOUS JEM!

ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST NATURALLY TALENTED RACERS, JEREMY WHATLEY CAME OH SO CLOSE TO LIFTING A WORLD CROWN. NOW, WITH HIS SON KRISTIAN SIGNING FOR CCM, JACK LOOKS BACK ON THE FOUR-TIME BRITISH 250 CHAMP'S CAREER IN A SPECIAL TWO-PARTER...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

What a cruel start to his CCM career for 18-year-old Kristian Whatley. One week a spanking victory in the British U21 championship, the next a snapped wrist at Mallory Park's British Grand Prix. It echoes all too unkindly his dad's start to 1991.

Signed up by John Osorio's bright new Action Workshop Kawasaki squad, with backing from Alec Wright at Kawasaki UK, four-time 250 national champion Jeremy 'Buck' Whatley embarked on only his second-ever season contesting both the British Open championship and 500 GPs.

Having dominated the early nationals with three race wins apiece at Foxhill and the Patchquick Trophy, Whatley arrived for the first British Open round in high spirits. There the brilliant track detective located lines others never dreamed of through the rough, sandy, rutted wastes of Canada Heights and won convincingly from Dave Thorpe and Kurt Nicoll.

Then at Payerne in Switzerland for the first 500 GP Jeremy, oozing confidence, overcooked it on his first flying lap of timed training on a damp, greasy Sunday morning. He cruised past me with Boeri helmet and goggles askew, shoulder plastered in mud and tellingly refusing to look me in the eye!

He never reappeared on track so at the end of the session I went in search of the lean, enigmatic Hampshire man. I found 'Jem' in the medical tent, wincing indignantly as a painkilling injection was jabbed into his left wrist. A typically laconic explanation followed. Off an adverse-cambered double ledge at the end of a fast straight he'd pinned the KX500 a fraction too soon on the wet grass and crashed heavily. Both Mark Banks and Mervyn Anstie had survived get-offs at the same mean spot. The ledge obviously recognised Englishmen – FIM race director Dave Nicoll's grand prix career ended right there with a broken ankle in 1970!

While making characteristically light of the affair, Jem's eyes gave the game away. He knew what a busted wrist felt like – the same injury had wrecked his only previous 500 GP assault, also for Kawasaki, in 1985...

Whatley missed half that 1991 GP schedule,

returning with a dynamic third overall in Italy behind championship contenders Georges Jobe and Jacky Martens. He then placed fourth overall, just a point behind a tie-break between Jobe and Martens, at Hawkstone Park and on the rostrum in second behind Jobe in race two almost tearfully thanked the crowd for their fervent support. The next round, in Germany, he mounted the podium again – second overall behind his old friend and foe Thorpe in a rare Kawasaki one-two. He eventually rescued 12th in the world and kept up this impressive momentum to claim his only British Open title that year too.

Direct contemporaries, Whatley and Thorpe (who was recently appointed race director at CCM and will therefore hopefully be working with Kristian!) first locked horns in the early eighties. Jem climaxed a successful schoolboy career with Uncle Alec's Team Green youth squad by claiming all three British titles in 1979 – the first kid to do so since Thorpe!

He then became a firm favourite of the late Graham Beamish at Suzuki. A British 250 GP appearance at Hawkstone Park in 1982 netted a point for 10th in race one (a feat repeated in race two by a tall, skinny youth called Jacky Martens!). Jem and mechanic Chris Scriven headed off on the 250cc grand prix trail in '83, though not before a terrific contest with Thorpe for the Patchquick Trophy in Devon followed by a long trip south through France to Beaucaire for the famous pre-season international.

I travelled down in the yellow Suzuki truck that weekend, accompanied the whole way by Michael Jackson's new album 'Thriller' at maximum decibels to appease the truculent 19-year-old. Unknown to the French crowd, Whatley created quite a stir by mixing it with the world's best before a big endo in race three. His face bruised and battered, Jem – like the obnoxious adolescent he could be – sat in the truck that evening, elbows planted on the horn, to the deafening discomfort of the paddock populace. "Jeremy who?" inquired French international Coco Gomez politely. And Whatley wittily adopted the question as his 1983 trade plate, competing all year with 'Jem Who' on the butt of his race pants.

Thankfully, he slept throughout our long night drive home!

>>



JACK BURNICLE was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.

British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...



WHATLEY FLEES TO A
ROSTLOHN FINISH IN THE
1983 WEST GERMANY
150 GP AT BEVERNE

Mercurial but inexperienced, Jem mounted the GP rostrum at Beuerne in Germany behind Jobe and reigning world champ Danny LaPorte and won his first moto at Frauenfeld in Switzerland four rounds later. Ninth in the series, just behind Yamaha's Dave Watson, 'Jem Who' joined Thorpe, Watson and Roger Harvey in a successful MX des team that finished a heroic third behind the USA and Belgium on a wet, grimy day at Angreau with Whatley demonstrating his true class by jousting with the best Open class riders on the planet.

Jeremy also claimed his first 250 national crown after a rousing last-round showdown with reigning champion Thorpe at Hawkstone Park. In contrast to the quiet, concentrated Berkshire man, Jem had already established a reputation as a jaunty, mischievous and rebellious jester – a kind of younger version of the notorious Graham Noyce who won Honda's first world crown in 1979. He celebrated that 250 title by treating himself to a camouflaged ex-army Land Rover for 375 quid! But Whatley was also a very talented, stylish motocrosser possessed of a shrewd, artful racing brain who, tragically, would lose his dad to cancer while still in his teens.

A lively lad from Parkstone, in Dorset, Jeremy actually spent the first two weeks of his life in East London and shared his birthday – November 30 – with Winston Churchill! His father, an engineer, built him a go-kart. "I promptly knocked down a cast iron drain pipe with it," grins the irrepressible Whatley. "Damn near killed me! Then I got adventurous and went up the heath but four wheels wouldn't go over bumps as well. A guy I knew had a bike and I

JEM WHATLEY CAME
HIS ACTION WORKSHOP
KAWASAKI TO SECOND
PLACE IN RACE TWO AT
HAWKSTONE'S 1981
BURTON 500 GP



JEM WHATLEY WENT DOWN THE SPRINTS AND THIS WAS THE FIRST OF MANY YEARS HE'D SPEND IN MOTOCROSS

BUTTER WON'T MELT!
BUCK WHATLEY AFTER
CLINCHING THE 1984
BRITISH 125 TITLE

tried that. 'Um, dad...' 'Okay son'!"

After an AP50 moped with knobbly tyres, his dad bought a Rickman Suzuki. Already a keen jumper, he nearly hung himself when his anorak caught in a tree. "Fortunately, the branch broke!" Jem started racing at 11, some five years later than Thorpe. "I did most of my riding in the pits. Rode everywhere. Never took my helmet off and got my first new bike, a Kawasaki, at 14. Coincidentally, Kawasaki phoned asking if we would be interested in a bike. 'Er, no thanks, we've just bought one!' So they let us have it for free!"

The following season sponsorship from Team Green led to that hat-trick of schoolboy titles before he moved into the adults where he constantly followed the 'Cheshire Charger' Pete Mathia. "We called him 'Muffin Mathia,'" smirks Jeremy. "He only had that old Montesa with an inch of travel front and rear but he was the boy on lines!"

Finding the cleverest lines round a track was Jem's constant aim. I once listened to him in a bar at the Dirt Bike Show enthusiastically explaining to a posh yachtsman how the ground could change almost lap by lap, challenging you to find new ways through. The gentleman listened intently and obviously understood – he had to deal with waves!

Whatley thought he was a dead cert for the 1981 British support championship but Alec Wright dumped him – a familiar story for many youngsters of that era! "So I won it for Suzuki after getting bikes and spares from Tony Barnard."

Midway through 1982 he picked up Suzuki factory bikes and experienced mechanic Scriven after both Billy Aldridge and Jonathan Wright had been sidelined by injuries. Jem promptly proved his worth on the bigger bikes, holding a

flying third in his debut British Open series behind Neil Hudson and Thorpe until dropping to fourth behind Dave Watson at the final round.

Third the following year, he also won that first 250 national title. "I thought I could beat Thorpe now and then," he explains. "I was a better tactician and better on riding skills but he'd take a lot of my lines when we were racing and just outpace me. He didn't really make time, he just never made mistakes!"

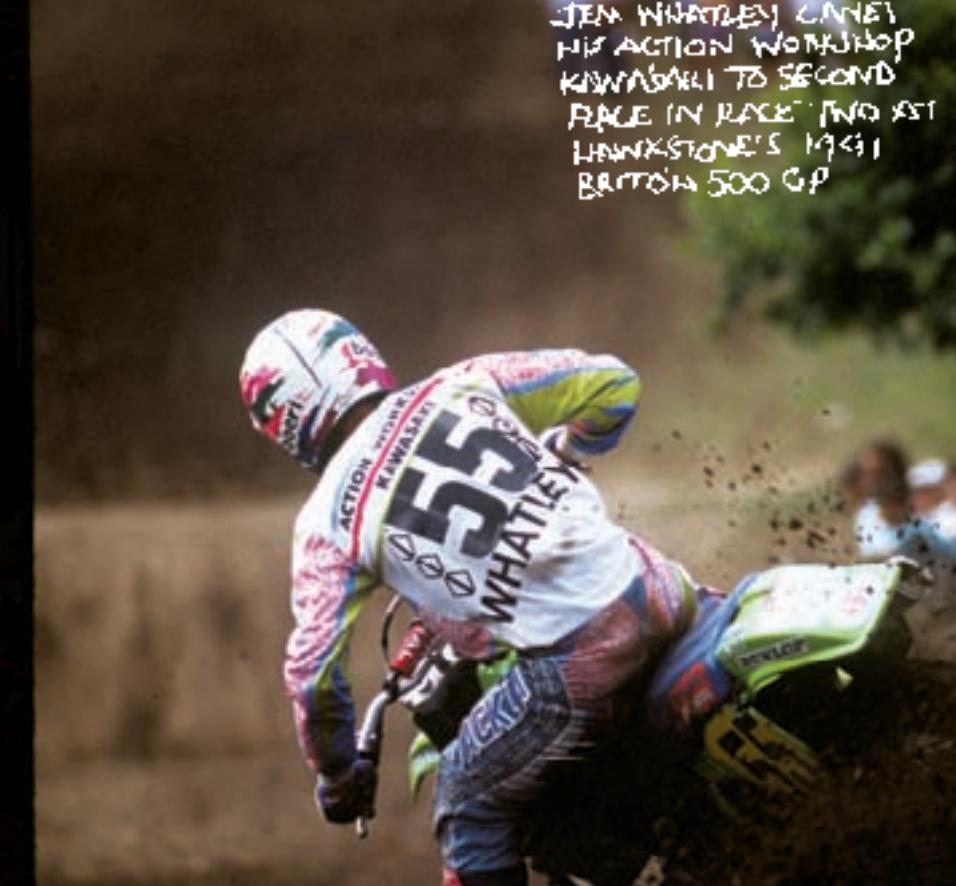
Unfortunately, this bright young street fighter had fallen under the wayward spell of ex-top 35 British championship backmarker Dave Grant. They were like a pair of errant schoolkids, often bewildering his new mechanic – little Australian 'Radar' (nicknamed, inevitably, by Jeremy after a character in TV series 'Mash'). Radar went on to win 500cc road racing world titles with Mick Doohan but could only push Jem to third place in the 1984 250 world MX championships behind Heinz Kinigadner and Jacky Vimond.

I remember Radar's frustration at Newbury's Fox and Hounds where the Suzuki took overall honours but dropped valuable potential points. "I don't know what Grantly's signalling him out there," lamented the Aussie after urging Jeremy vainly on in pursuit of surprise first race winner Andy Nicholls.

Victories at Newbury, the spectacular Nismes in Belgium and a tie-breaker with that man Martens in Germany – where they traded race wins at Bielstein – were counteracted by bad days at Unadilla and the vital penultimate round at Rothenthurm in Switzerland.

He arrived there 19 points ahead of Vimond and only 22 behind Kinigadner. But Jacky won both motos with Kini third overall and Jeremy nowhere.

It would be the closest Whatley ever got to a world title...







Words and photos by Adam Duckworth

OVERGROWN KIDS ON RIDICULOUSLY EXPENSIVE
TOY BIKES OR A GREAT SPORT THAT'S OPENING UP
MOTOCROSS TO A FRESH AUDIENCE? WE CHECK OUT THE
FIRST ROUND OF THE MBP POWERSPORTS BRITISH
MINIBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP TO FIND OUT
WHAT'S SO MAGIC ABOUT MINIS...

MAGIC!

1

It's a non-threatening entrance to off-road motorcycle racing.

"If you crash then there's not too far to fall," is the view of mini bike first-timer Dave Gay (yes, that is his real name).

With no motorcycle experience at all, Dave's entrance into motorcycle racing comes thanks to a £2000 BBR 88cc race bike, based on a Honda CRF50 as most race minis are. "My mates took it up and, as the bikes aren't so big and scary like full-size motocross bikes, I thought I'd give it a go," says the 25-year-old.

Mini bike racing could be the new starting point for motocrossers of the future.



2

It's a cool new sport for gizmo-mad mountain bikers who want to go faster.

Yes, they may be only push bikes but there's a whole new generation who don't think twice about dropping up to £4000 on a dirt bike – a pedal-powered one that is – loaded with cool, high-tech components. So £4000 on a fully-specced custom mini bike isn't a huge stretch.

Tim Newcombe, 20, caught the mini bike bug from colleagues in the mountain bike shop where he works. The clutchless CRF50 was easy to ride for someone with no motorcycle experience and the mighty internet and eBay helped him research and buy all the kit he needed to make his race debut.



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DIADORA MK3 WG KIDS 36/2	£79.99	£49.00	ACERBIS LTD EDITION WH/OR L	£34.99	£15.00	NO FEAR ELEKTRON BROWN 30	£119.99	£29.00	HJC CLX 4 RED XS	£99.99	£39.00
DIADORA MX3 BLUE EURO 42	£139.99	£89.00	FOX HC ADULT 07 RED S	£29.99	£19.00	NO FEAR SPECTRUM WH/OR 36	£99.99	£39.00	M2R BLUE ADULT L	£69.99	£39.00
FOX TRACKER BLACK US 9	£124.99	£89.00	FOX HC ADULT 07 WH/NW M	£29.99	£19.00	KTM PHASE 07 OR 30	£79.25	£49.00	M2R RED ADULT S	£69.99	£39.00
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FOX TRACKER SILVER US 8	£124.99	£89.00	FOX FLEXAIR 07 WH/BLU XXL	£29.99	£19.00	KINI RED BULL 06 BLUE 36	£119.99	£69.00	M2R YELLOW ADULT S	£69.99	£39.00
ASTARS TECH 6 WHITE US 7	£209.99	£139.00	FOX BLITZ 07 WH/STRIPE L	£38.99	£29.00	KINI RED BULL 07 WH 34	£119.99	£89.00	PATRIOT DOG 52-53 Y XL	£89.99	£49.00
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FOX F3 07 WHITE US 9	£224.99	£179.00	FOX FLEXAIR 07 OR S	£38.99	£29.00	KINI RED BULL 07 WH/TE 36	£119.99	£89.00	BELL MOTO MATT BLACK S	£129.99	£79.00
FOX F3 07 BLACK US 9	£224.99	£179.00	FOX FLEXAIR 07 OR M	£38.99	£29.00	KINI RED BULL 07 WH/TE 36	£119.99	£89.00	M2R REV 1 RED ADULT S	£119.99	£79.00
GLOVES	RRP	MUST GO!	FOX FLEXAIR 07 OR L	£38.99	£29.00	FOX BLITZ PANTS 07 GREEN 32	£129.99	£89.00	M2R REV 2 RED ADULT S	£119.99	£79.00
NO FEAR KIDS BROWN L	£21.99	£9.00	FOX VERTIGO 07 RED M	£38.99	£29.00	FOX 360 PANTS 07 GREEN 32	£129.99	£89.00	M2R REV 2 SILVER ADULT S	£119.99	£79.00
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FOX BLITZ BLUE L	£29.99	£23.00									

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4



You can build the most blinged-up factory bike for £6500 and it doesn't drop in value overnight.

At 45 years old, Craig Lucas has spent his whole life racing dirt bikes and he definitely likes the finest machines. Especially small-sized ones.

He races a tricked-up Honda CRF150 in Southern Motocross races and this Kawasaki KLX110 in mini bike races. Except just about the only Kawasaki bit left is some engine parts. The rest is the latest cool kit from around the globe like a BBR aluminium frame, Takagawa motor and Pro Carbon protection which adds up to £6500.

But unlike motocross bikes that dive in value as soon as the new model comes out, Craig's super-mini will still be droolsome for years.

5



Smaller riders aren't at a huge disadvantage.

If you're vertically challenged, muscling a 200lb-plus motocross bike around can just be too much. But in mini racing, being small can make a huge difference.

Nick Cole may be 16 years old but only weighs eight stone wet through. After racing motocross for five years, currently piloting a Yamaha YZ125, he doesn't have the physical strength of some of his bigger rivals.

But on a mini he's the holeshot king as his power-to-weight ratio is so high.

3

You can buy a race-ready competitive bike for £1100.

Don't let the pimp daddy Bentley Continental fool you, this is a genuinely quick race bike for those with more sense than money. It's a new Stomp and it made its UK debut in the hands of James Breckon against a field of fully tricked-out specials worth up to six times as much. It may not have the kudos of a BBR custom special and its reliability is unknown but it is competitive.

Breckon, a 33-year-old former British MX championship racer, sold his £5000 Kawasaki KLX at the end of 2007 to retire. But after his racer brother Jason died suddenly in his sleep earlier this year he decided to race on in his honour. Helped, no doubt, by the cheap wheels...



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There are classes for not-so-mini mini bikes.

If you're normal size or larger, then squeezing yourself onto a 50cc mini bike is an exercise in cramp and ridiculous contortions. Enter the mid-size class where the Kawasaki KLX110 is king.

The wheels are bigger, the motor more powerful and the dimensions edging towards grown-up. And not only that, modifications are limited, keeping costs pretty reasonable.

Simon Vowels is a 32-year-old ex-motocrosser whose £2500 KLX is typical of the class. And you can buy them complete and ready-to-race.

6

It's great for girls.

Dragged along to watch her brothers racing motorcycles, 25-year-old Debbie Phelps decided to join in the fun and start racing herself.

She briefly dabbled in the frankly oddball and antiquated sport of grasstrack racing before discovering mini bikes and is now regularly qualifying for the A finals. "And the blokes really don't like being beaten by a girl," laughs the Loughborough lass.



7

It's a fledgling new sport for dirt bike thrill-seekers to pioneer.

Clever marketing types have a buzzphrase for them – early adopters. In two-wheel adrenalin sports that means the pioneers who took up downhill mountain bike racing, BMX dirt jumping and now mini bike racing.

Lee Kermode is not only one of these trend-setters but a super-successful one with talent to make you blow chunks. He was ranked fourth in the world in BMX, then became British mountain bike champion, a British championship-level expert motocrosser and now mini bike pro on his £2300 Monster Moto. All that and he's still only 25.



8

CAMEL HOOF!

WAKKER GETS HIS MITTS ON A 530EXC BUT HIS DEBUT RACE AT A CAMEL VALE ENDURO ENDS IN A&E WITH A BROKEN FOOT...

Words by GEOFF WALKER

The KTM 530EXCF has had an interesting couple few months of use. Here is the story so far with the mag weapon...

With the KTM 250EXC two-stroke going back to KTM after its winter's use I was a little down for a couple of weeks without a magazine machine to play with. I was thinking where I could go with the mag bike and what would be an interesting ride when Ross gave me a call from KTM HQ. There was a 530 EXC ready to rock and within a couple of hours the beast was being loaded in the yellow Renault bomber by myself and Big Al!

It was straight to the mighty Marshfield for a bit of a shakedown ride on the 530 and what a surprise was in store. The bike was even better than I remembered from the test last year. The big Toomer's ease of ride and light feel while on the MX track and enduro loop was awesome. I was a little worried about it being a bit of a beast in the tight stuff but it worked pretty well at the Marsh.

My enduro mentor and the man responsible for getting me excited about woods riding goes by the name of 'Uncle' Tony Dinharn. He is not a handsome man (Rupeckt the Monkey Boy is one

nickname) but he has been racing enduro bikes and bouncing off trees since time began. Anyway, Uncle D also works hard behind the scenes with the very friendly Camel Vale club in the deep south and together with the mega hard-working 'Goose' and the rest of the Cornish club's members they put on some of the best timetrial enduros in the UK.

The 530 got the invitation to go down to the second round of the championship at Hustyn Woods near Wadebridge so it was up to me to get it down there and ride it!

The modifications for the enduro were as follows. The rules say a rear trials tyre must be used. This saves the woods from getting too cut up by the bikes and I'm all for this kind of action if it allows us to keep using superb venues like this one. Ideally with the trials tyre you would run a pretty worn-out mousse so the pressure would match up to around eight to 10psi.

Unfortunately I was running stock tubes so Team DBR had to run with 14psi to avoid punctures as there were a couple of small rocky areas on the lap. As you can probably well imagine the big 530 coupled with a skinny trials tyre made for an awesome day's fun trying to find grip! >>

Geoff brushes up on his trials skills in the wilds of Wales



HAFREN ACTION!

GODFREY'S LET LOOSE ON WELSH WEC COURSE >>

Words by GEOFF WALKER Photos by JONTY EDMUND

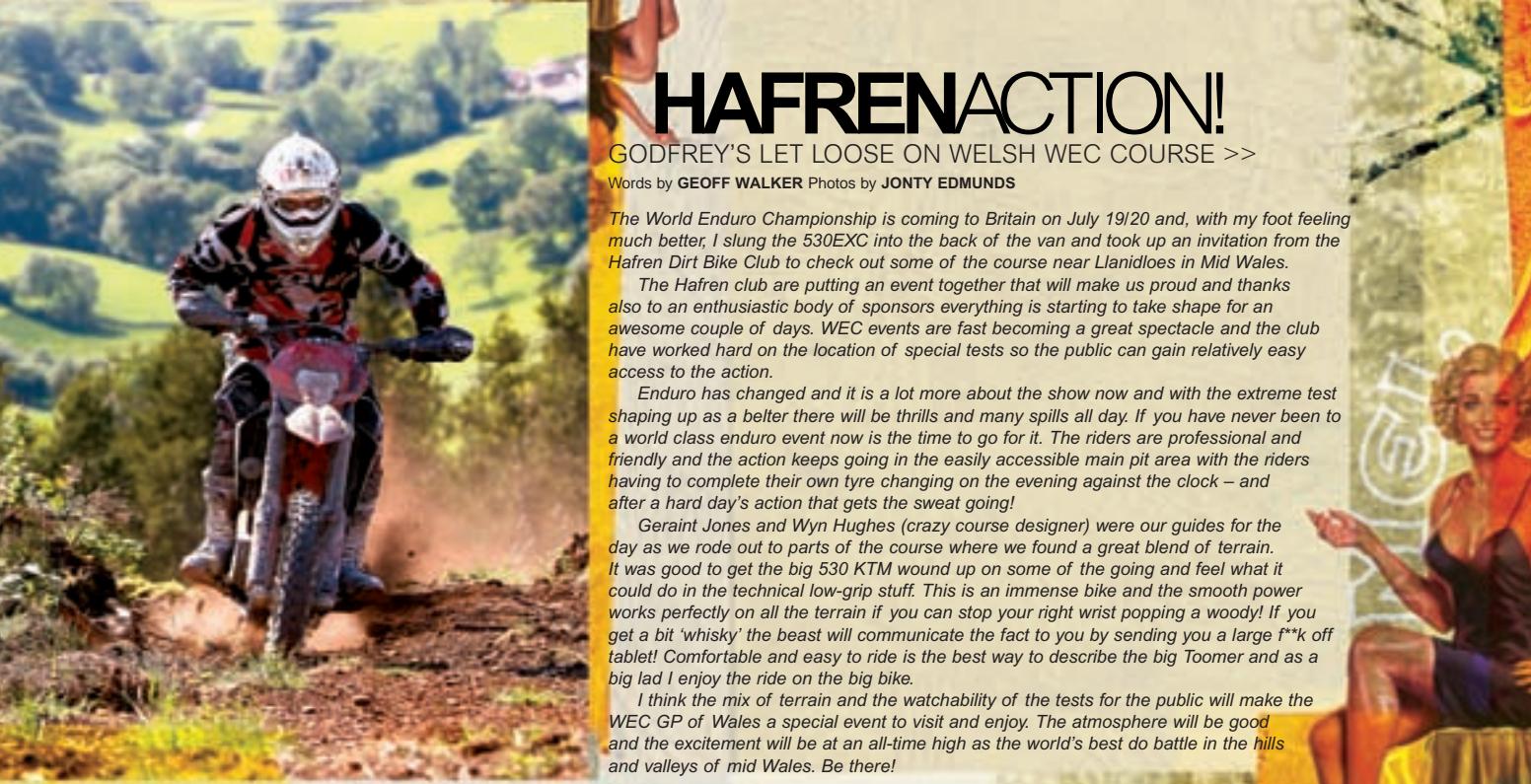
The World Enduro Championship is coming to Britain on July 19/20 and, with my foot feeling much better, I slung the 530EXC into the back of the van and took up an invitation from the Hafren Dirt Bike Club to check out some of the course near Llanidloes in Mid Wales.

The Hafren club are putting an event together that will make us proud and thanks also to an enthusiastic body of sponsors everything is starting to take shape for an awesome couple of days. WEC events are fast becoming a great spectacle and the club have worked hard on the location of special tests so the public can gain relatively easy access to the action.

Enduro has changed and it is a lot more about the show now and with the extreme test shaping up as a belter there will be thrills and many spills all day. If you have never been to a world class enduro event now is the time to go for it. The riders are professional and friendly and the action keeps going in the easily accessible main pit area with the riders having to complete their own tyre changing on the evening against the clock – and after a hard day's action that gets the sweat going!

Geraint Jones and Wyn Hughes (crazy course designer) were our guides for the day as we rode out to parts of the course where we found a great blend of terrain. It was good to get the big 530 KTM wound up on some of the going and feel what it could do in the technical low-grip stuff. This is an immense bike and the smooth power works perfectly on all the terrain if you can stop your right wrist popping a woody! If you get a bit 'whisky' the beast will communicate the fact to you by sending you a large f**k off tablet! Comfortable and easy to ride is the best way to describe the big Toomer and as a big lad I enjoy the ride on the big bike.

I think the mix of terrain and the watchability of the tests for the public will make the WEC GP of Wales a special event to visit and enjoy. The atmosphere will be good and the excitement will be at an all-time high as the world's best do battle in the hills and valleys of mid Wales. Be there!





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Thanks to everyone involved with the mag bike and its run outs. KTM UK, No Fear, Hafren Dirt Bike Club, ISO2 nutrition, KP Equipe racing, Three Cross Demolition, Rush Racing, Team Dinham, Goose, Camel Vale, Team Fordy, Goldwing and Simon R.



The major change to the bike for me was the fitment of the new Easton EXP bars. These bars are tested against all the other brands with various fatigue processes and according to the data are some kind of super-strong units! The bars fit to the bike via some very neat oversized clamps. The clamp kits are available for pretty much every bike and the fit and quality is second-to-none.

They come with an allen key socket and the bar's clamp bolts must be torqued up perfectly to keep the fit and strength optimized. The torque figures are etched onto the clamps as are the fitment lines so you can line the bars up perfectly. They look a little bit different and the massive pad is a bold statement of strength. The bars have gone through 15 hours of testing on the big KTM and the flex and comfort of them have looked after my hands and arms.

The only other change to the bike was to

back off the front and rear suspension five clicks each on compression damping and push the forks through 5mm further to help the beast to turn in the tight going.

The event ran so sweet and for the championship class we had eight laps with each lap having to be completed a little faster throughout the day. On four of the laps you are timed on a cross country 'test' which would normally determine the results on the day as long as everyone stayed on time.

Uncle D worked out my times for me as I ate my power food (thanks Chloe) and off I went at 10.02am with 41 minutes to get around the lap – this time allowance would drop to 32 minutes for the last two laps. One of the guys on my minute was Jason Frazer on his little flyin' Husky. Jason is a cool guy and it was good to entertain him with some wipeouts throughout the day! All went well through the first few laps and with team

Dinham in the pits to let me know what was going on and when I had to get to the line to start my next loop I was able to really enjoy the ride on the 530 and the excellent course.

My special test riding wasn't too much different to my speed everywhere else as I wanted to stay with a nice pace and have fun. A few crashes with other riders made things interesting but nothing could take the fun away until I caught my foot on a hidden log at about 40mph! The crunch let me know something wasn't too good down there on my left hoof.

With the two tightest laps on time to do there had to be lots of heel-shifting action but it got me to the finish in time although it was a pretty long couple of laps. Awesome event, great club and friendly medical staff on hand to send me off with Team Dinham to the x-ray department at the local hospital. One broken bone, a massive smile and a happy 530 KTM! What a day.

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HARD YARDS

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HARDY'S REALLY ON A ROLL, UNTIL...

RARP!

UUGH... CAN'T CATCH HIM



AT THE HOSPITAL



PRO SHOW!

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

IN MODERN TOP-FLIGHT MX IT'S A CASE OF 'DON'T SHOW IF YOU AIN'T PRO' AND – DESPITE BEING RELATIVE NEWCOMERS TO THE PADDOCK – THEY DON'T COME MUCH MORE PROFESSIONAL THAN SWIFT SUZUKI...

I don't know about you but I don't mind admitting to day dreaming about what I might do if my numbers came up on the lottery. After the holidays, cars and houses have all been bought and Justin Barclay's finished my private track in the garden (don't forget that cosmetic 'procedure' you've always wanted – SL) I've always thought that I'd start a motocross team.

With this in mind I was more than happy when DBR were invited to visit the workshops of one of the biggest teams in the paddock, Swift Suzuki. Not only would I get to see exactly what I will need when the win comes up but we were also offered an opportunity to test one of Swift's race bikes, fresh from the GP at Mallory. My joy at riding the race bike was short-lived – apparently you need to be "more than half decent" at riding one and with my level at average/stabiliser, DBR's chief test pilot Tony Marshall took on the riding duties.

Looking at Swift Suzuki's presence in the paddock it's hard to believe that the team have only been around for 18 months. In this short space of time they have already achieved factory status with French rider Pascal Leuret as well as fielding Jake Nichols and Elliot Banks-Browne in MX2 with Brad Anderson campaigning the MX1 series for 2008.

The team came together when the John Banks Group – which owns Honda, Suzuki and Mitsubishi car franchises – decided they wanted to start their own motocross team. The Banks family have a rich motocross heritage with John Banks a two-time world number two, his son Mark a former British champion and younger son Justin no slouch on a bike either. Long-time family friend and former British champion Jonathan Wright was brought on board as the team manager and the task of working out the best way of securing finance for the team began.

"We approached the whole thing differently than most other teams," explains Jonathan, "in that we looked outside of the motocross industry to gain the finance. There's no way we could gain enough finance to run this team as we wanted to run it by us turning up at motocross events and saying to people within the industry 'will you sponsor us?'"

Having signed American rider Sean Hamblin and Elliot Banks-Browne, Justin managed to secure finances from both the two and four-wheeled divisions of Suzuki.

"We wanted to be a team that promotes itself and the products associated with it. That's why the team marketed and branded against the Swift car," continues Jonathan. "We didn't just want to be a motocross team with a name, we wanted to be branded against something that everyone can see and buy and want to be part of."

The association with the Swift car isn't a random one – it was well thought out and fitted perfectly with the image that the team was trying to create. The car is aimed at the 17-25 age group – the key demographic for motocross – and another big sponsor is Relentless energy drink, again aimed at the 17-25 age group.

The team is totally professional and is run as a business – not a hobby – and as such has strict rules and budgets to conform to. Every business partner/sponsor is contracted with signed written agreements in place. With finances secure the HQ and workshops were set up in Cambridge, the team opting to remain in the UK as opposed to setting up on the continent as funding was coming direct from Suzuki GB making things easier to control over here.

>>

John Banks Group
www.johnbanks.co.uk



I had an idea that the workshop was going to be a fair size but when I walked through the office into the work area I was in for a surprise. The workshop is huge – at a guess I'd say it's probably 25m by 40m and very impressive with bits of exotica everywhere you look. The team has its own machine shop should anything need knocking up in a rush and its own dyno/rolling road as well as an entire bay for the 450, one bay each for the two 250s and a bay for suspension and motors. As Pascal Leuret's bike is a full factory machine it is kept at the Geboers' factory Suzuki workshop in Belgium where it is worked on by Pascal's own factory mechanic Guido Vissers. Guido will then bring the bike and its spares and meet the team at each GP where it then comes under the Swift awning.

As I'm shown around the workshop by Jonathan Wright it starts to become apparent exactly how big the lottery win is going to need to be – four numbers just isn't going to cut it! We walk past shelves loaded with Yoshimura boxes with 'Special Parts' written on the label in gold. I don't even know what's in them but I want one! Akrapovic pipes, Michelin tyres, Renthal boxes full of UFO plastics, every engine part you can think of. I pluck up the courage and ask Jonathan what the annual budget is. "I know exactly what it

is," he laughs, "but I'm not going to tell you..."

The workshop has every spare part needed to build a complete bike from scratch. The spares are kept to a manageable level and it's head technician Ian Browne's job to make sure that nothing runs out – luckily, a quick call to Suzuki GB will mean that anything needed can be delivered by the next day. Of course, if you happen to be at a race in Bulgaria things could get tricky! In a season the team will go through 450 tyres, 60 pairs of handlebars and about £35k worth of exhausts. Every weekend each bike gets new sprockets, chain, plastics and graphics and each rider also has three sets of spare Talon wheels.

Swift purchase their bikes directly from Suzuki and each rider is allocated nine bikes and will have two practice and two race bikes at any one time. They also have a complete spare engine each. Once a race bike has done three GPs it is then downgraded to a practice bike and as the next race bike gets downgraded so a practice bike will get sold on, keeping everything accounted for.

The workshop deals with all the motors in-house, each one being totally stripped down and rebuilt after every race then run up on the dyno to check performance. Suspension is also

dealt with in-house by Ian along with Swift partner K-Tech who have the facility to dyno test the units which, incidentally, are worth more than my CRF250 and all my kit cost new! As well as Ian, mechanics Mick Day, Chris Churchill and Joe Lewis are at the workshop working on bikes that are in varying states of build including Brad's 450 which took a bit of a beating at Mallory and now has its exhaust in the wrong place. Even though the next GP is a week-and-a-half away the mechanics will be at the workshop every day, preparing the practice bikes for the next day. Indeed, Mick is preparing Jake Nicholls' bike for us to use at the test the following day as we walk past.

Outside in the car park is the huge yellow and black race transporter that anyone who has been to a GP or British championship round will have seen. Able to sleep eight and cater for about 30 people on race day, it is an awesome beast. The truck was brought from the Monster Mob Ducati road race team in 2006, then stripped out and refurbished to suit the team's requirements and is now worth a cool £250,000. The team worked with the marketing department of Suzuki GB for three months before the final graphics design was agreed upon and even the chairs under the awning all match the truck.

Testing times for Tony Marshall, Jonathan Wright, Mick Day, Elliot Banks-Browne and Jake Nicholls





While the workshop on board the truck is not quite as extensive as that of the main shop it's still more than capable of sorting out any bike problems that arise. For a race weekend the truck will carry six bikes, 18 spare wheels, forks, swingarms, triple clamps, pegs, complete brake systems, drawers with countless levers, sub frames and it even has a kitchen sink! The team is sometimes away from the UK for up to three weeks at a time so enough spares are carried to cover every eventuality, including blown motors.

The truck also provides the hospitality for the sponsors at the races and as such has a fully fitted kitchen on board with American style fridge and six-ring hob. The truck also has a full size washing machine and tumble dryer that's used to clean all the team race kit and team clothing. While the team is away the truck is not only the workshop and hospitality unit but a home from home for the mechanics and riders. The front section is fully carpeted with sofas, LCD TV, beds and shower and operates a strict no-shoes policy!

Image is an important part of Swift Suzuki.

Next time you're at the race truck have a really good look around and you'll see what I mean. One of the team's partners is Shift clothing – a subsidiary of Fox – and it's a requirement of every rider to wear it if they wish to ride for Swift Suzuki. I ask Jonathan what would happen if a rider they wanted to sign came with his own clothing sponsor. "That's simple. If they wouldn't change then they wouldn't ride, our image is that important to us." Not only do all riders wear Shift gear but you'll also notice that they all wear the same colour when racing.

To keep a team like this running takes 12 full-time employees – including the riders – and the team has just grown with the inclusion of recently signed Scott Elderfield who will be riding the BYMX series as well as selected rounds of the British championship in the MX2 class. Hopefully for Scott he will be able to avoid the injuries which have plagued his new team-mates this season.

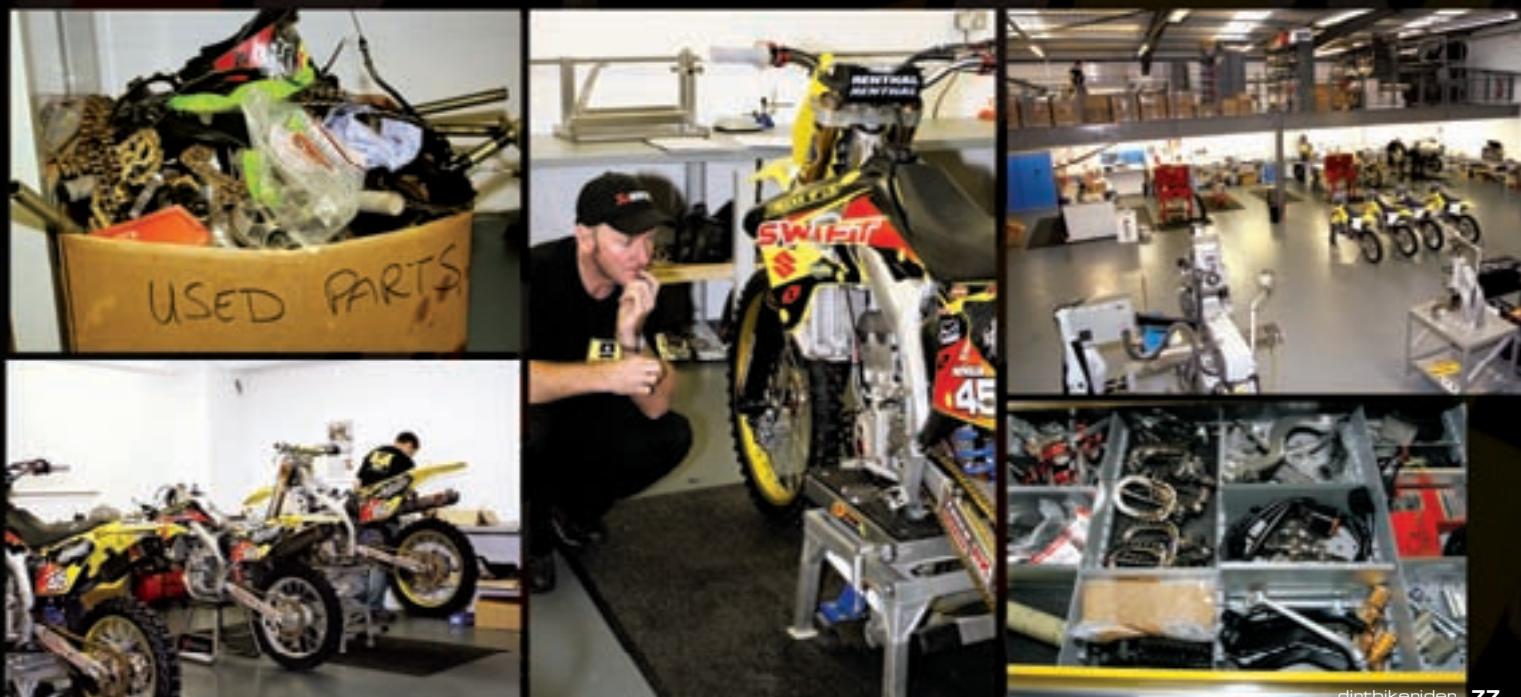
Every Swift rider has been injured this season hampering the team's hoped-for results. Leuret is out with a broken shoulder, Nicholls

punctured his lung and damaged his ribs, Anderson injured his foot, got a concussion and broke a collarbone while Banks-Browne broke his hand. Everyone knows that injuries go hand in hand with motocross but it's still a bitter pill to swallow.

"Our long term goals were to have a better results profile," says Jonathan. "Professional image is a big part of things but at the end of the day you have got to have results as well. We thought we had it but because of injuries it just isn't happening for us at the moment."

Injuries aside everyone in the team seems upbeat about the rest of the season and the riders are slowly overcoming their various injuries. Swift Suzuki is a highly professional, well-organised business that knows exactly what they want and where they are going. The presence of teams like Swift Suzuki, Molson Kawasaki and CAS Honda in the paddock has raised the bar for everybody and in the process raised the profile of motocross in general.

To follow the exploits of Team Swift Suzuki log on to www.suzukimotocrossteam.com



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ELLIOT BANKS-BROWNE >>

Age: 18
Nickname: ASBO
Lives: Bury St Edmunds
Been racing: 12 years
Achievements: '05 British BSMA 125cc champion, eighth in the MX2 British championship round at Matchams in '05 while only 15, 13th in British MX2 championship in '07 plus scored two world championship points
Ambition: To be British and world champion

BRAD ANDERSON >>

Age: 27
Nickname: Ando
Lives: Tow Law, County Durham
Been racing: 19 years
Achievements: Top three throughout schoolboy career, two-time KWS champion, two-time British four-stroke champion, two-time fourth in British MX2 champs, finished 4th in MX1 British champs in '07, won MX1 overall at Lyng in '07, finished 11th in first moto in the French GP in '07
Ambition: To be British MX1 champion and realise full potential in world champs



JAKE NICHOLLS >>

Age: 18
Nickname: Reverend
Lives: Ipswich
Been racing: 12 years
Achievements: '99 second 60cc British champs, '05 third Premier 125cc British champs, '07 finished 17th in a world MX2 moto, '08 finished fifth in a British MX2 round
Ambition: To be world champion



PASCAL LEURET >>

Age: 27
Born: Nogent Sur Marne, France
Achievements: Five-time French champion
Ambition: To be in the top three of the world championship

CHEERS M'DEARS!

HOWDY PARDNERS...

We asked Jonathan what was the most important part of setting up the team? "It was getting the right team partners on board and I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Suzuki GB, Relentless, John Banks Group, Fox Europe, Shift, Trucks R Us, Talon, European Dispersions, K-Tech, Putoline, Michelin, Akrapovic, UFO, Bickers, RK, Steve Lumley, Swallow Max, Works Connection, Radio Accessories, Hinson, Lightspeed, One Industries, Renthal, Twin Air, Kromex and CTi. I appreciate that it's a long list but without this support we simply couldn't operate."

**Jake's 250F is super-sharp
and ultra-responsive –
"this thing just rips out of
turns" reckons Tony...**



RIPPIN' REVEREND!

OUR CHIEF TEST PILOT SWINGS HIS LEG OVER JAKE NICHOLLS' 250F RACE BIKE AND FINDS IT'S A CASE OF SWIFT BY NAME, SWIFT BY NATURE...

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by JP O'Connell

When I got the call to test Jake Nicholls' race bike – not the factory bike but Swift's own thoroughbred – it brought a smile to my face. Jake's someone who I've spent loads of time riding with since I quit my racing career and I've watched him closely from his days on a 60 all the way through to the 250F.

As a stocker the RM-Z250's very good. So with the team having a head start on the rest of the manufacturers from stock I was looking forward to seeing where they had taken it.

The first thing so easy to notice is how sharp and responsive the motor feels. The motor feels stronger than the gearbox allows it to be and I felt like it could pull any gear at any time – this bike could do with losing a tooth or two off the rear sprocket as I could pull top gear in no time. This things just rips out of the turns. There's no bogging anywhere – even when I went off line and landed in some soft stuff this baby just wanted to pull.

The power isn't lacking anywhere. The mid-range is like the bottom – strong and responsive and it gets to the top-end really quick. We all know the main thing about four-strokes is not to over rev them but there were times when I kept holding a gear – that's just a bit of laziness (plus old habits don't just leave you and I have been riding a two-stroke lately). I felt like I needed to concentrate to pull early gears as this bike just loves it.

Kicking the bike over got easier as the day went by and the hotter it got the easier it seemed to start so full credit to the spannerman Mick and the motorman Ian.

As is the case with any top rider's bike, Jake's only started to feel super-comfortable when I

picked the speed up. The harder I hit things the better it felt through the forks and shock. I had some real hard landings after I over-jumped (I really didn't fancy face-planting on the double) and it must have looked funny from the sidelines watching me trying to soak up some of the impact with my body. But to be fair even landing on the flat felt like I'd landed on the downslope with the bike refusing to load up and bounce me down the straight.

Coming into the turns the front end felt spot on. I really did like the way Jake's bike handled. And like the front the rear just wanted track over the bumps. Where we were testing was a straight of rolling whoops which was a great test for the rear – and it was my little legs that stopped me getting far enough back that let me down, not the suspension.

The front end worked really well with the rear but at times I felt a little like I was riding a chopper – Jake runs higher bar clamps to what I would choose and this is why it felt a bit weird. But I must say it did help me feel more in control – it might have looked strange but I felt strong. Jonathan Wright said I looked like I could have done with the fork through the clamps more and he was right but I really do try to ride a bike as it comes to me so I can get a sense of the rider set-up.

For me the seat height was spot-on but I am sure Jake would benefit from a higher seat foam. Nowadays there are a lot of riders running a stepped seat foam but this was my first time and I could straight away feel the benefits. It really does help you keep your riding position out of the turns.

The brakes did their job with a nice feel through the lever and pedal and no fade to catch me out.



RIPPIN
REVERE
team profile

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IF YOUR CHOSEN OFF-ROAD SPORT INVOLVES LONG HOURS
IN THE SADDLE THEN YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO TRAIN
SMART, EAT SMART AND RECOVER SMART...

Words by Alan Milway Photo by Sutty

When it comes to off-road motorcycle sport, motocross tends to hog the headlines. Fast and furious, extrovert and with a winner-takes-all mentality, it is often regarded as the pinnacle of all things dirt bike.

However, with the advent of events such as the Erzberg Rodeo, Last Man Standing and The Tough One, enduros have risen in profile and are attracting more and more specialists.

One of the biggest challenges facing any rider in this arena of competition is the fact they must maintain performance for an extended period of time. But how on earth can you go about preparing for this? Here are some of the key factors to help you get the best from enduros...

HAVE HEART

In my previous article I talked about what your heart goes through on a motocross bike and compared it to a heart rate profile for a cross country skier. If motocross is very high intensity for a 'relatively' short period of time, enduro events not only reach this high level (in timed stages for example) but require it to be sustained for hours on end.

This is the first area to focus on when trying to prepare for competition and is actually one of the biggest challenges as the duration of training is so important. If we break down a motocross event and look at total riding duration in a day's competition it may just about reach an hour-and-a-half (but will often be less). This total duration can form the basis of a single cardio/endurance session and is not

necessarily a problem. However, if you are faced with a five to six-hour day in the saddle, or numerous hours on consecutive days, suddenly the total duration is well beyond what you can train for in one stint.

Although some riders might not want to classify themselves in this way, there are parallels between enduro riders and marathon runners or ironman triathletes. The duration and effort levels are similar – and all while trying to keep it rubber side down! Endurance athletes are not able to train by running a marathon every day but have an increased volume of training over a week-long period to compensate. This is a major challenge for anyone but if you want success at the weekend the hours need to be put in during the week!

Riding the bike is obviously a great way to train but other cardio exercises such as cycling, swimming, running, rowing etc are all great training methods.

EAT NOT TO GET BEAT

One of the most common complaints I have from riders is the fact that they can start strong and push for an hour or maybe an hour-and-a-half but then their performance suddenly deteriorates and they feel awful, can't ride anywhere near to their potential and their race really suffers.

This fall in performance can be put down to carbohydrate depletion. Where for shorter MX races a rider can have enough fuel onboard at the start of the day to pretty much finish the day, for an enduro rider this store is not enough. If you do not take in carbs as an energy source

you will be forced to rely on burning fat as a fuel on its own. Now this might sound ideal to the bigger boned readers but fat burns very slowly (think of how slowly a candle burns) and although it gives out a good amount of energy there is no quick supply. This means our output has to be massively reduced.

Preparation is key to postpone the onset of carbohydrate depletion. Good, large portion carb meals – think pasta, potatoes, rice, bread or fruit – in the build up to the event (and also training) will help massively. Also you need to eat during the event. Snacking in the form of banana pieces, malt loaf, jelly babies, cereal bars etc should be your best friend at any opportunity! Also consider a carbohydrate drink in your Camelback or in your water bottle. This will give hydration as well as a fuel supply.

Please note, an energy drink is something that is beneficial to performance and not a podium fashion accessory. I was at huge professional road race last week and the riders were quaffing bottles of water and cans of coke after they finished the race. The most highly-tuned athletes in the world with the best scientific back-up used these two basic products.

HYDRATE OR DIE

This kind of ties in with the previous point but is vital to performance. Any level of dehydration will affect performance in some way and there has been some very interesting research in this area recently.

Original thinking stated that any level of dehydration would impair the body's ability to

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427

maintain core temperature and this rise in core temperature would affect performance.

Recent findings have suggested that even with a relatively extreme dehydration of five per cent body weight, core temperature only rose slightly (five per cent dehydration is so severe that it would take five hours to rehydrate fully).

However, this does not tell the whole story as with only a two per cent drop in hydration, skills and co-ordination are massively impaired. Now when you are tackling difficult terrain at speed this is a serious – and dangerous – disadvantage. With helmets, goggles and riding kit on, although it may not be very hot you still sweat and with the length of the event dehydration is a real problem. ‘Little and often’ is probably the best mantra to follow pre-exercise, during exercise and post exercise. Carbohydrate can be added to water to not only maintain hydration but also increase and maintain fuel stores.

RECOVERY IS KEY

During the season back-to-back races are common and a full-time job leaves little time to prepare and recover for the next one. Trying to train, fix the bike, travel and work (let alone look after the kids or wife) is difficult. Often people get it wrong and try to cram in too much training or riding without sufficient recovery.

It starts from when you finish the race when you need to look for food, water and rest. There are also ways to help recovery such as special

compression tights to help blood flow back to the heart and recover the muscles faster. Sound too girly for a hard motorcycle racer? Well, the All Blacks use them – still sound girly?

The following day try and have a very gentle cycle – this will help recover the muscles and speed up recovery. Aim to eat lots of protein as well as carbs. Fish, meat and eggs are all great sources of protein that speed recovery. Try and get in good rest too – sleep is important and alcohol will affect sleep patterns and quality of rest. Lay off the booze if you want to perform!

RIDE TO WIN

Training off the bike helps massively and should be a great consideration during the off-season and when you can't get out on the motorbike. However, if you can get on the bike make the most of it! Hours in the saddle, enjoying a ride out with your mates or tackling a tricky route will get you in the mood to race and compete and make you realise why you go through all that pain and fatigue at the weekend... |

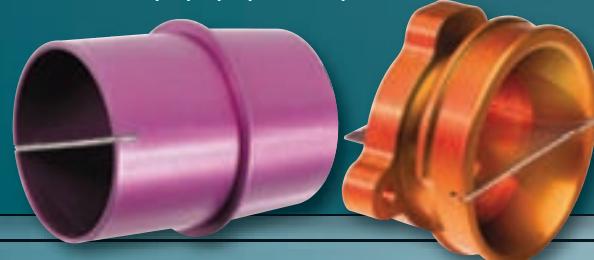
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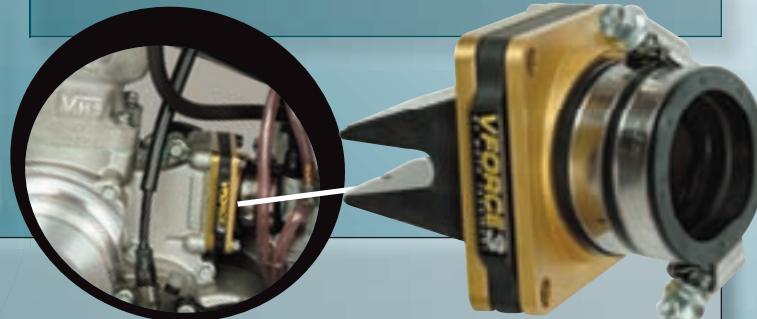
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LUCKYBREAK!

SEAN HAMBLIN'S NEVER HAD THINGS EASY BUT AFTER A YEAR BASED IN BRITAIN HE RETURNED HOME TO THE STATES WHERE HE'S JUST PICKED UP A FACTORY TRY-OUT WITH YAMAHA...

Sean Hamblin has been through a lot in his career. As an amateur he had top support from Yamaha but lost it after his mom and dad got in a very public argument at a big amateur event in the USA. When he finally turned pro it was hard for Hamblin to find support and he was forced to go race the Canadian nationals where he promptly won the Lites championship.

Returning in 2002 to the USA, he raced the World Four-Stroke Championships at Glen Helen on a YZ426F and was so impressive that he got a try-out ride with the factory Suzuki squad. He ended up replacing injured Travis Pastrana on the

team and put in some solid rides which extended his relationship with the Suzuki factory for a few more years.

But lately things haven't gone that well for him. After a couple of dismal years in the States he headed to the UK to take on the British MX championship and GPs for Swift Suzuki.

Although he didn't do poorly, the results weren't what Swift were looking for and he ended up heading back home to the USA where he put together a privateer Yamaha ride with the help of Tuf Racing and his good friend (and national champ) Grant Langston.

We sat down with Hamblin in the off week between the Mt. Morris and Colorado nationals to talk it over.

However, just after concluding the interview came news that he had signed with the factory Yamaha squad on a three-race try-out to replace the injured Langston and/or Broc Hepler, both of whom were scheduled to race the YZ450F in the nationals and both of whom are hurt.

So after the Colorado national we got a hold of him again to get an update on his situation. The interview went as follows... ▶

STATESIDE

Racer X's editor at large, He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

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DBR: Let's start with your career and how you got stuck on two-strokes for so long when we knew that you were a good big-bore four-stroke rider the whole time...

SH: "Obviously, it just depends on what opportunities come up. When I rode that four-stroke really well it was before they were 'big' and only one manufacturer was really pushing it and that was Yamaha. My best deal came about with Suzuki in '02 and I was with them for '02 through '04 and then '05 I had the Kawasaki and then '06 - I wouldn't even claim for that to be a year of me racing a dirt bike, I was just riding one. With all of the problems we had within the team and also just myself.

"It's good to be back on a four-stroke in a competitive class and on a competitive bike. My last year or so on the two-stroke, I was definitely not competitive as far as results went because I was already behind the eight ball before the gate even dropped..."

DBR: You're a pretty muscular guy. Does that help you with the bigger bikes? And did it hurt you on the 250Fs?

SH: "I don't know to be honest. I'm never one of those guys that's in the gym. I just cycle a bit in the off-season and I do some spin classes and that's about it for the year. When I'm out racing that's it pretty much and then during the week when we're out riding I'm just fine-tuning stuff to make sure I'm still in shape. But as far as muscle stuff, that's just pure genetics. I was fortunate in that area along with having a full head of hair for the rest of my life which I'm pretty sure of."

DBR: You were on Suzuki on 250 two-strokes, then a Kawasaki 250 two-stroke, then Suzuki RM-Z250s for a couple years. What went wrong?

SH: "Obviously, the Kawi deal was kind of a late thing to deal with. It was a struggle all year with everything - with the equipment and then within myself struggling with dealing with the fact that I wasn't on factory equipment again. It was so late that we couldn't get the bike sorted out, either. I think all along we just had these little problems and they just kind of chipped away at my confidence and the results started to show it. That was a huge deal.

"And then I got the Rockstar Suzuki thing and I went out before the year started and told myself that I was going to try harder than I ever had before to come out swinging and it all pretty much just backfired on me. I was just doing quite a few laps every day. I did more than I ever did before and it all came back and slapped me in the face and it never ended up the way that I wanted it to. You go from kind of being the guy that would just go ride and that was it to becoming the guy that really wanted to turn over a new leaf and then to have it end like that, it just wasn't fun."

DBR: What was it? Burn out?

SH: "No, it wasn't that, I was just getting really frustrated in the way that the team was dealing with some things and the way things never really came together. I'm still in a hole from that year. Quite a few of us are still owed



money from it and all year long you show up to go race and little things go wrong but they add up.

"For example, you show up to the hotel and you go to check in and they say 'here's your room, what credit card do you want to put it on?' and you're like 'you should just leave it on the credit card that it was booked on'. Then it's 'oh, no, that one's already maxed out'. So, already, on the weekend you're starting out on a negative and we went through that every weekend. I paid for all my hotels, all my flights and still haven't been reimbursed for it. How many times do you have to go through that?"

"And on top of that, what happens with the bikes that are neglected? Or the lack of parts? It was always a negative, every weekend. There was always something that went on negative during the week or on the weekend that just tore you down mentally."

DBR: I was going to ask you about how much tougher it is to be a privateer but it almost sounds like you had to do that on the Rockstar Suzuki team already in 2006.

SH: "Damned near, man. It's really discouraging to get on one of these teams and you expect it to be a team and here you are paying for flights and rental cars and everything else and then having them tell you 'we'll get you paid back later, just put it on your card'. And at the end of the year you have this huge bill and you didn't get paid that much to start with and then they say 'sorry, the money's gone'. What do you do? You get a little discouraged and you want to go off and do your own thing. That's where the whole Europe thing came from. I felt that it was a huge turning point for me to go back there and kind of get my head straight again about racing. After the '06 deal I didn't really want to look at a dirt bike. It gets really frustrating."

DBR: Talk us through Europe. I had a voicemail a while back and you ended the call with 'cheers' – I thought you were American...

SH: "I am! It was good for me, though. It was something that I had done when I was 17 when I went to Canada. I missed my high school graduation to go racing and obviously that year it came out as a good thing. I also went to Europe with the same mindset. Every time I've gone somewhere that's been a new experience for me I've done quite well. I felt that overall I did pretty well. Obviously, the results didn't speak that loud. Some races they did but some races they didn't."

"You've got to take it all as a learning experience for one and think of all of the good things that came from it and move on. I know a lot of the top-name guys didn't even qualify for every GP in their first year. There are certain things that you kind of have to learn when you're there. You just have to go there and learn from trial and error."

DBR: One other thing about Europe is that it rains a lot in England and you were racing that British championship as a California boy. It couldn't have been that easy as Californians aren't notorious for their mud skills.

SH: "It wasn't that bad. We didn't have that many mud races. I mean, there were a few but as long as you're positive going into it, positive things will come from it. That was the attitude I took to the races."

DBR: You've unwittingly spent a lot of your career on Suzukis, from the factory team to Rockstar Suzuki to Swift Suzuki in Europe. Did you think about riding Suzukis again as a privateer this year?

SH: "What's funny is that I didn't pick anything. It was all that was offered at the time and I'm pretty fortunate to have one of my best friends be a very giving person and one that respects me as a friend and as a racer and that's Grant Langston. Grant has done great things for me. We were in each other's weddings and I think that speaks for itself that we are great friends off the track. He wanted to make sure that I got myself going back in the right direction and so it was on a Yamaha. It's a great bike so far."

DBR: How did the break-up happen with your team over in Europe?

SH: "I never signed a two-year deal. I had a one-year deal but I went over there under the impression that I was going to ride a 450. When I got there, sat down and had some meetings with Suzuki, they really wanted to make an impact with the 250F. Obviously, that was the only deal that I had at the time so what do I do? Do I get picky and tell them no thanks? Or do I pick up something where I feel that I can still shine and make a name for myself even if I feel that I need to be on the bigger bike? Obviously, we stuck on the 250F and I felt that with my performances I put the team on the map."

DBR: What does that do for you mentally to be on a factory team for the time being? On one hand you've got the bike and the support and on the other hand there has to be some added pressure, too, right?

SH: "I wouldn't say so. The funny thing is we had a meeting after the race and we all sat down and went over the whole weekend's things and that was one thing that Keith [McCarty, of Yamaha] wanted to make sure of – that I wasn't putting any added pressure on myself because of this."

"He said 'you got to this point without us so we don't want to do anything to interrupt that, we just want to give you the best possible equipment to help you do better – keep doing what you're doing and better things will come'. That's a pretty big thing coming from somebody that high up. That's a big confidence-booster so to have the team behind me that is a huge deal."

DBR: If things work out is there any talk about you continuing on with them maybe into next year?

SH: "I don't know. There's obviously a lot of things going on for next year. I think there's going to be quite a few changes and you never know – I may stay on a Yamaha. Funny things happen. You know how it is. As soon as silly season starts it's all up in the air and, fortunately, I've picked a good time to start getting results again and busting my ass to make sure that I can be a top name again among all of the good guys."



Mike Alessi gets to the opening turn first – no surprise there then...



STREAKERS!

STEWART AND VILLOPOTO LET IT ALL HANG OUT TO KEEP THEIR WIN RUNS GOING...



AMA NATS WRAP

Davi Millsaps leads team-mate Andrew Short – the Honda riders are running third and fifth in the Motocross standings



Paul Carpenter is outside the Motocross top 10



Ryan Dungey is Villopoto's main threat – until he goes down like a sack of spuds in Colorado

The 2008 Toyota/AMA National Motocross Championship has turned into a riding clinic in both classes as defending Lites champ Ryan Villopoto and former Lites champ James Stewart have 19 wins from 20 motos run so far.

One truth you can count on is that in the middle of Texas in June it's going to be very hot and very humid. To date the AMA/Toyota MX Nationals have been pretty easy on the riders – at Glen Helen it probably never topped 75 degrees and at Hangtown it was a breezy 85 – but at Freestone County Raceway it tops out at a balmy 104 degrees Fahrenheit. The end result is that it's as much about survival as it is about racing.

In the Lites class Villopoto looks like he's going to give the competition a chance when he goes down early in the first moto but he fights his way back through the leaders, first passing Weimer, then Stroupe and finally Dungey to grab the moto win. But by the end of the first Lites moto it's only about 96 degrees.

By the time the riders line up for moto two the thermometer is pegged well above 100 degrees and this takes its toll. Riders are dropping like flies. Villopoto's team-mate Metcalfe actually finishes ninth in the moto even though he is literally passing out from the heat while still on the track. He manages to cross the finish line and then faints while still on his motorcycle and has to be treated by the Asterisk Mobile Medic crew.

As much as is possible in the conditions Villopoto makes it look easy as he passes Dungey for the lead and puts in a couple of the fastest laps of the day to pull away from the pack. From there he never backs it down and finishes with a huge lead over Dungey in second, Stroupe (who is also later treated for heat exhaustion), Weimer and Texas resident Tommy Hahn. That's also how they finish overall.

"Yeah it was hot, for sure," Villopoto says. "I couldn't back down because I know that Dungey is on his game and if I backed it down I knew he would've climbed right back up on me and I didn't want that to happen."

In the 450cc class it's almost exactly the same story. Alessi gets both holeshots and in the first moto he actually leads the first lap. However, Stewart goes by Alessi on lap two only to fall a couple of turns later and hand the lead right back. Stewart gets up in fifth and goes back to work and by lap five he's back in the lead and he

takes off. By then Alessi has a huge lead on third as well and the top three are set with Stewart taking the win followed by Alessi and Short. Suzuki privateer Cody Cooper grabs a strong fourth in the moto.

Then comes the hotter, much more brutal second moto. Alessi gets the holeshot and isn't going to budge easily. Stewart works on Alessi for quite a while before he finally makes his move and it takes Stewart three full turns and straightaways before he can actually claim the lead. Eventually Stewart takes the win over Alessi, Ferry, Millsaps, Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Michael Byrne and Short.

High Point Raceway at Mt. Morris, Pennsylvania, has not been very kind to Stewart in the past. He has only won at the race track one time coming into this year's AMA national and that was way back when he was riding 125s (on his way to grabbing nearly every record in the class including most wins in a season and most wins in a career). Last year he was beaten overall by a retiring Ricky Carmichael and two years ago he had actually pulled away from Carmichael and looked to have it in the bag when he went over the bars in dramatic fashion.

Coming into High Point this year Stewart has won every single moto of the season going 1-1 at Glen Helen, Hangtown and Freestone. "I was just trying to make it out of this weekend," Stewart says after the race. "My record's not too good here. I've had a couple crashes here and last year Ricky got me. I've always struggled at this track."

At the start of the first moto Alessi grabs his third holeshot in a row. "If I'm going to start getting holeshots he's got to gain some weight," Stewart says. "Until that happens... I had a good jump but he just had a better angle that first moto."

Stewart isn't far behind and as he and Alessi head into the back part of the track Stewart uses a series of inside/outside moves on Alessi to eventually grab the lead. Stewart leads every lap of the first moto to take the win over Alessi, Millsaps, Ferry, Short and privateer Yamaha rider Sean Hamblin.

Alessi gets the start again in moto two and this time he actually manages to lead the whole first lap before Stewart forces his way by to grab the lead on lap two. From there Stewart goes on to record his first win at High Point since 2004. "I had fun today," says Stewart. "I just wanted to stay up the first couple of laps and then let it come to me and that's when I started digging in."

Alessi finishes second again followed by Millsaps, Ferry, Short and then Yamaha's Josh Hill which makes the overall the same as the moto finish.

In the Lites class Villopoto continues his winning ways. In the first moto Weimer grabs the holeshot but immediately begins to make mistakes. "I went off the track two or three times in the first lap-and-a-half," says Jake. "I went back from first to fifth and then I had to work my way up from there."

MDK KTM's Martin Dávalos assumes the lead from Weimer in his first off-track excursion and Izzi follows along with Villopoto and Dávalos' team-mate Ryan Sipes. Villopoto immediately goes to work and passes both Dávalos and Izzi at the same time by splitting them down the finish-line straightaway and then over-jumping the finish-line jump to lead lap two. From there Villopoto pulls away to a solid victory followed by Weimer, Izzi and Lawrence who passes Sipes for fourth on the final lap. "I'm just trying to be consistent," says Villopoto. "Jake and these guys were riding really good so I didn't feel like I could let up out there at all."

Motosport/Xtreme Kawasaki's Andrew McFarlane gets the second moto holeshot followed by Weimer and Villopoto who is on a mission and quickly moves into the lead. Lawrence grabs second in the early laps only to have a mechanical failure knock him out of the moto.

After four laps Villopoto leads Stroupe, Dungey, Weimer and Metcalfe. Metcalfe proceeds to chase Weimer relentlessly, eventually passing Weimer for the fourth spot at about the halfway point only for Weimer to latch back onto Metcalfe's rear fender. At about the same time Dungey finds his way by Stroupe and into second and the field is set. Villopoto wins the second moto going away over Dungey, Stroupe, Metcalfe and Weimer.

"Getting in the lead early helps out a lot – you stay clean, and you don't get any roost – but for me if I get a bad start I can work my way up too," says Villopoto. "I'm comfortable pushing like that."

The first-ever night-time AMA national MX event is next on the schedule and the teams head for Lakewood, Colorado. After the first practice session under the lights is held on Friday night it is met with a smattering of poor reviews from many of the riders who thought that many sections of the track were too dark. There is even at least one rider who notes that some parts of the track are too bright although that is likely because the preceding section is so dark.

The AMA gets together and works with the teams, riders and promoter to improve the lighting situation and by Saturday night there are a few smaller lighting rigs accompanying the seven massive lighting towers already in place. The end result isn't perfect but it's an improvement over Friday night and even the most sceptical riders admit by the end of the day that it at least isn't bad.

The first Lites moto gets going just after the sun disappears behind the hillside on which the track sits. Izzi gets the holeshot but Villopoto is quickly into the lead and immediately begins putting time between himself and Izzi.

Villopoto leads every lap of the first moto to record his eighth consecutive race win while Izzi just barely holds off team-mate Dungey for second. Geico

Powersports Honda team-mates Josh Grant and Trey Canard (both of whom missed the last race due to injury) finish fourth and fifth.

The second Lites moto begins after the sun has completely set and this time it's Grant with the holeshot followed by Dávalos and Boost Mobile/Yamaha of Troy's Mike Brown who has just returned to the USA after spending most of the last two years in Europe riding for CAS Honda. The fastest section of the track – a downhill with two double jumps in it – sees Dungey crash hard on the opening lap. He drops out of the race after coughing up blood at the side of the track and is transported to the hospital. Grant immediately begins to pull away but even early in the moto he knows that he isn't going to be able to last the entire race as his injuries have kept him from training for nearly six weeks.

"For the first couple of weeks they told me not to do anything to raise my heart rate at all," Grant says. "I'm lucky this was a night race and it was cool because if it was hot it might have been a lot harder on me for my first race back."

Villopoto starts near the tail end of the top 10 just in front of Canard and they both begin slashing their way through the pack. Grant leads the first 12 laps before Villopoto finally catches him and the battle for the lead ensues. Villopoto makes the pass stick a couple of times only for Grant to come back in and force his way back by for the lead.

Finally, just before the start of the 13th lap, Villopoto makes an aggressive move around the outside of a turn before the finish line and takes the lead which he holds to the finish. Grant holds off team-mate Canard for second (and second overall) while Izzi is fourth (his 2-4 good enough for third overall).

With his closest championship rival – Dungey – out, Villopoto now enjoys a healthy lead in the title chase. "I guess it's more than a race's worth of points now but I'm not going to change anything."

The action in the 450cc class is almost scripted at this point. For basically the entire series – except for round two – it has gone like this. Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Mike Alessi grabs the holeshot but then gives way in the very early going to Monster Energy Kawasaki's James Stewart who leads the rest of the race while Alessi finishes second.

Colorado is a carbon copy of that exact scenario. Alessi gets the holeshot in the first moto only to give way to Stewart before the end of the first lap. The eventual finishing order is Stewart, Alessi and then local boy Short. After him comes team-mate Millsaps and Byrne.

Moto two sees the scenario repeated with Alessi getting the holeshot only this time leading three laps before Stewart gets by and begins to pull away. Millsaps ends up third while Short holds off Timmy Ferry for fourth and Byrne finishes sixth.

"That second moto, it took me a while to adjust to the lights," says Stewart. "So I took my time and then once I felt comfortable I went for it and luckily I was able to get the win." Stewart now leads the championship by a whopping 51 points (250 to 199) over Alessi with seven rounds still left to run.



He came out top in SX but Trey Canard's finding the going tough outdoors

With five rounds down James Stewart has a maximum 250 points – that's 10 straight race wins



RV's Pro Circuit team-mate Austin Stroupe is running third

SERIES STANDINGS

MOTOCROSS

		MOTOCROSS	LITES		
1	James Stewart	250 points	1	Ryan Villopoto	241 points
2	Mike Alessi	199	2	Ryan Dungey	183
3	Davi Millsaps	188	3	Austin Stroupe	152
4	Timmy Ferry	179	4	Jake Weimer	152
5	Andrew Short	141	5	Brett Metcalfe	143
6	Michael Byrne	130	6	Jason Lawrence	120
7	Nick Wey	103	7	Dan Reardon	104
8	Sean Hamblin	102	8	Nico Izzi	92
9	Ivan Tedesco	95	9	Matt Goerke	89
10	Jeff Alessi	94	10	Trey Canard	83

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Mike Alessi – Human Holeshot Machine

RECAP!

WITH THE AMA NATS HURLING TOWARDS THE HALFWAY MARK OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER TAKES A LOOK AT THE SUCCESS – AND FAILURE – STORIES SO FAR...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

Well folks, we're almost halfway through the AMA Nationals and I thought it would be cool to recap them and look at the riders that have performed and some that have, er, not. The AMA series has been condensed this year with only four weekends off for the 12 weeks of racing as many felt the series was too drawn out, making for a long year. The downside is guys like Trey Canard and Ivan Tedesco are trying to ride with injuries and just don't have the time to get better. Anyways, let's have a look-see at the series shall we?

The MX1 class (over here we're dropping our dumb-ass 'Motocross' and 'Lites' for next year so let's just start now) has been dominated by James Stewart. Stewart has simply been as dominant as many people thought he would. His only nemesis is himself and without RC over here to push him over that line where he gets out of control he can ride safely at 90 per cent and still gap the field. His fitness is obviously better after going out and hiring RC's trainer.

The next pack of riders is Mike Alessi, Davi Millsaps, Tim Ferry and Andrew Short. They've all been in second behind James at one point but in the last few races the Human Holeshot Machine (Alessi) has been the second best guy. Mike gets the start, sprints away from the pack and holds it there until the end. Ferry has been great a few times (Hangtown, Texas) and just average the other motos but being the veteran that he is, he'll be there at the end.

Millsaps has been a bizarre case – he has had some horrible motos where he goes backwards and you think he's done but then he gets some kind of second wind and starts riding great again. At the High Point press conference he said that he hasn't been riding much because his water truck broke and that he just started doing motos!

Andrew Short DNF'd the second moto of the year and then crashed his way to the back in another so he was a ton of points back early on. His speed hasn't been on the level of the other guys but he hangs in there and gets it done. If anyone else wins a moto this year in the 450 class it'll be one of these guys.

Another thing to think about is the fact that Mike is very determined to get on the USA des Nations team – he feels that he got slighted the last few years (and he might be right) and so that's a huge motivation for him. With his team manager Roger De Coster also the USA team manager he's got a bit of an advantage wouldn't you say?

The rest of the pack is fighting for sixth with the leader so far being Michael Byrne. He's 27 points up on seventh and 49 back off fourth! The Burner has been riding pretty solid really – don't forget he missed all of supercross recovering from a knee injury. All things considered I think he's been fast and I heard that Suzuki doesn't want him back next year which is curious – he's better in supercross and a great second guy to have on a team.

KTM's Nick Wey is next in the points but he's been struggling to recapture his form from a few years ago. Don't go and tell me that the bike is no good

(oh wait, you won't because over there you guys love KTM's – they get a bad rap in the USA for some reason) because Alessi won motos and podiumed the hell out of that electric starting thing. Nick is one talented rider that I hope will find his way back to the front soon.

Remember 2002 when Sean Hamblin came out of nowhere at Glen Helen and ran top 10, eventually earning a factory ride with Suzuki? Talk about a privateer done good story! Well, Hamblin is threatening to be the 'Sean Hamblin' of 2008 because he got some help from a dealership, showed up as a full privateer and started becoming the top Yamaha rider which in turn forced Yamaha to give him a factory bike! He's eighth in the points and looking good to stay on that bike all year. Swift Suzuki guys must be wishing they put him on a 450 by now, huh?

Just as James is creaming the competition in the MX1 class, Ryan Villopoto has been doing the same in the MX2 class. Every year people come in saying that the MX2 class is up for grabs and that more riders can ride a 250F to the stops, it's harder to recover from a bad start, yadda, yadda. RV is proving everyone wrong by grabbing the bull by the horns and winning nine out of 10 motos. Man, was it ever weird because in the first moto of the season RV got a bad start and could only make it up to fifth. There were whispers that it was going to be a race this year and that Villopoto's wrist was still bothering him, his mojo was gone after Canard beat him in supercross etc etc. Forget all that, he's been great and has over a moto lead on the next guy.

That next guy would be Ryan Dungey. The Suzuki kid has been a little more outspoken this year and can't seem to get the starts all the time that he needs to run with RV. As of this writing he crashed heavily at the Colorado race and I'm thinking he's going to miss some time with a concussion. We'll see I guess.

Austin Stroupe has been very fast as well – he's tied with Dungey but for raw speed he's almost as good as RV. He's had your typical second year brainfades and stuff like that but he's the real deal for sure. Jake Weimer has been good also, it's been a break-out year for the Snake and he's signed with Monster Pro Circuit for next year. Brett Metcalfe has been fast but, like Josh Grant, his window is closing pretty quickly to do something in the class. The kids that are coming up are hungry and fast – they aren't waiting around for the vets to get going!

Jason Lawrence won the first moto of the year, has been fast in spots here and there but with his off-track life becoming more the focus than anything else he's been slipping a bit lately. Jason won the supercross title and it's a successful year for the brash kid – look for him to pull out of the nationals with a 'virus' or something like that soon. His MX1 buddy Josh Hill has also not had a good year outside – it's as if these kids figure that they won in SX so they don't have to work that hard for MX.

Other disappointments are Martin Davalos, Ben Townley (hurt), Tommy Hahn and Gavin Gracyk. These guys have all battled injuries and poor motos but there's still time to turn it around.



Two years ago when I last sat down with Wayne Smith one subject dominated the interview – his desire to race GPs. He wasn't doing them, he wanted to do them and he saw racing on the world stage as the key to taking his career to the next level.

"Doing GPs draws you on," he said at the time. "I know it pulls me on. I see myself as a GP rider and want to get back into them, whether it's next year or the year after."

Well it's the year after now and the 26-year-old's still not got a regular start at GPs. But a couple of tough seasons down the line it's a different Wayne Smith I'm talking to, an older and wiser rider who a few weeks before had taken the MX1 overall at Desertmartin's round of the Maxxis British championship.

"This year's made me realise that, yeah, in one sense I do want to get back to GPs but the opportunity's never been there since Chambers quit," says Wayne. "But I've learned that with a good British team and having a good bike set-up it's possible to race in England and beat the guys who are doing GPs which I proved at Desertmartin.

"In my heart I do want to eventually get back to GPs if the opportunity ever arises but at the moment I'm really happy just riding in England. Being happy and having a good team and a good bike is the key to going fast." **>>**

Goggles off and charging is typical of Wayne



FRESH THINKING!

IF TWO YEARS AGO YOU'D TOLD WAYNE SMITH HE DIDN'T NEED TO RACE GPS TO WIN AT BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL HE'D NEVER HAVE BELIEVED YOU BUT THAT WAS BEFORE HE HOOKED UP WITH PIONEER YAMAHA – AND BEFORE DESERTMARTIN...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sutty



profile

"Give me your clothes,
your boots, your
motorcycle..."



Wayne had been lined up to do a full season of GPs with the Chambers KTM team in 2004 but a run of injuries sidelined him for much of the year. Then in January '05 the Chambers squad, which had switched to Honda over the winter, dramatically folded leaving Wayne high and dry.

Paul Rowlands and his PAR Homes Honda team came to Wayne's rescue but the deal centred around domestic races with just a handful of GPs on the cards. And it was much the same in '06 and '07 when, despite even more injuries, Wayne was able to win the British four-stroke title as a farewell gift for PAR before taking up a ride with Roy Emberson's Pioneer Yamaha outfit.

Wayne swiftly settled into his new team and working with Embo and team manager/chief technician Mike Forster has undeniably brought out the best in the laidback Cumbrian.

"A lot of it is mind over matter and this year working with Roy and Mike has made me realise the most important thing is getting a good bike set-up and being happy with your team and surroundings. It's made me a stronger, more all-round rider and that's showing in my results.

"Since I was a little boy it's always been the same thing – I've always wanted to go and do GPs. But the opportunities aren't there like they used to be – in England there are only three or

four teams that are doing the GPs. I did a few GPs last year and financially just to get to the races is an absolute mission. In England I can make a reasonable living and get by from day to day and enjoy my racing without the stresses and worries of getting to the races.

"Roy's put me an awesome package together this year and taken a lot of stresses off me that I've had in the past so now I can fully concentrate on my racing, doing my training in the week and I can try and reach my full potential every weekend."

Wayne certainly did just that at Desertmartin where he went 2-1 to claim his first race win and first overall victory at full British championship level. In his last interview we joked that if he was any more low-profile he'd be no-profile and in the run up to Porters Pit – and with championship leader Billy MacKenzie sidelined – nothing much had changed.

"There was a lot of speculation going into Desertmartin about who was going to be up there because Billy wasn't going to be racing but there was no mention of my name. Everybody's always speculating about other people and I just wanted to go out and prove what I can do, prove that I can win, prove that I am still here.

"I knew in my own mind that I could win and it was nice to break that barrier and prove to people how much I want it and how much I work

for it. It's been getting stronger and stronger and we've stepped it up every week and at Desertmartin it all slipped into place. I felt very comfortable in the week practising and we just went there and I rode my bike how I know I should ride. It was a very special day for me, really special. One of the best moments in my life."

His victory surprised a lot of people but with no injuries to worry about, a great team behind him and a bike he was confident on, going into the Irish round Wayne knew he was in the best shape of his life.

"This year I've come in stronger and fitter than ever and mentally stronger than ever with a good team and a good bike. Everything has slotted into place and I feel like I know where I am and I know where I want to be. I want to win more than I've ever done in my whole career."

"My speed's been coming week-in, week-out now and for me it's been a series of stepping stones from the start of the season. Me and Mike have been working so hard to get the bike

set up and between me, Mike and Roy the amount of hours we've put in has been unbelievable."

So can Wayne continue to make all the hard work pay off? Well he's within touching distance of winning the British Open title – in effect retaining the rebranded four-stroke crown – and feels he's well positioned in the Maxxis MX1 series with three rounds still to run.

"I've realised the importance of being mentally strong – not just in racing but in life. It's being strong when things are going wrong – that's the biggest thing to learn – and looking to pick the positives. Believing in myself and believing what I can achieve."

"With the challenge of a new team came new motivation and that gave me big momentum into this year. We started off with a win at the first Open round and it's got stronger every week and I'm leading that championship now by 54 points so I'm hoping we can get it wrapped up a round early."

It's a big step up from the Open series to the full Maxxis championship but Wayne's positive mental attitude is unshakable. "Even now it's still not out of the window because Billy's been injured, I'm 20 points off James for second and there's still three rounds to go so anything can happen. At the end of the season realistically I'd like to finish in the top three if not better."

"I really feel in the latter end of the season if I ride like I know I can ride and ride like I did at Desertmartin, even when Billy comes back there's no reason why I can't challenge for wins and podiums every race."

"Obviously, Billy's the man to beat at the moment – in the British he's been unstoppable. Brad Anderson's a warhorse. He's there week-in, week-out. So's James Noble and he's so consistent – he's always there and is another rider you can't rule out. The top six in the MX1, anyone of us can win races and it comes down to who's the strongest and who wants it the most – and that was me at Desertmartin."



NEW RECRUIT

LIFE IN EMBO'S ARMY

"The team is based around the riders and if there's any problem it's solved straight away, it's eliminated so we can move on. You can be the fittest guy on the track but if you haven't got a bike that's set up properly and working properly you might as well bury your head in the sand."

"When I spoke to Mike towards the end of last year I knew there was potential and knew that if I could work with Mike and Roy and we could get everything 100 per cent then we'd have a winning combination. It's taken time but we've been getting stronger and stronger as I've got more comfortable with the bike and more comfortable with the team."

"I'm enjoying my racing more than I've ever done in my whole career and at the end of the day that's why I started riding because I love to ride a bike. You sometimes forget why you ride and start applying too much pressure on yourself and that's when it all goes Pete Tong."

"It was a one-year deal when I signed but I'd love to stay with the team because I really do get on with the guys and really feel that if I can stay there we've got a good chance of winning the British championship next year."



PANDA-MONIUM!

WITH A NICKNAME LIKE MX PANDA JUST HOW POTENT A RIDER CAN INOTEC-SUZUKI'S CLEMENT DESALLE ACTUALLY BE?

Words and photos by Sutty

With a riding style that's at times similar to Stefan Everts' and an ability to scrub jumps better than Bubba, 19-year-old Belgian Inotec-Suzuki rider Clement Desalle looks like he has all the tools needed to make it to the very top of our sport. Widely considered within the MXGP pits to be one of the riders who could be the next big thing, Clement himself is peckish – like a Panda – for success.

Hailing from La Louviere in the French-speaking west side of Belgium, Clement's pretty much a rarity in the sport as most successful waffleland racers are from the Flemish-speaking Flanders region to the north of the country. But because Clement grew up riding hardpack tracks in western Belgium as well as in France – he was a French 80cc regional champion at 11 years of age – it's no surprise he rides with a much different style to many of his countrymen.

Definitely one of the new school of riders who tries to turn himself almost inside out every time his wheels leave the ground, Desalle's American-inspired scrubbing style is for sure a real head-turner. But how does a Belgian boy learn to scrub like a Cali bro? "I learnt by watching DVDs and videos of great riders and then going out and trying it myself."

While his exciting riding style gets him noticed on the track it's his attitude towards his competition that is perhaps most impressive because despite only being in his third season as a GP rider he doesn't give a rat's ass who he's battling with on the track and he's not afraid to bang bars with the best.

"It's important for me to be the best I can be and to not just concentrate on beating somebody else. So I concentrate on my own riding and of course on riding the track as quickly as possible and so it doesn't matter to me who I'm racing against whether it's the world champion, the championship leader or anybody else for that matter.

And that 'doesn't matter to me who' outlook on racing has seen Clement rattle many of the sport's leading riders already this season. The young up n' comer straight-up beat reigning MX1 world champion Steve Ramon and GP moto winner Max Nagl in a round of the ADAC German national championship through pure speed alone – but not all the battles have been so clean...

At round three of the MX1 world championship in Portugal he got into something with the then series leader Ken De Dycker that saw both riders hit the deck. Clement smiles when I ask him about it. "I enjoyed racing with De Dycker in Agueda. It was unfortunate that we crashed and both lost a place in the fight – that was never my intention. I really enjoyed it though, it's fun to battle hard with somebody like that."

And that's not the only time that Desalle has clashed with a red plate holder. In France the young Belgian upstart had a coming together with Italian Yamaha rider David Philippaerts and that clash saw the championship leader's footpeg ripped clean from his bike which meant a DNF was inevitable. While the Italian claims it's all Desalle's fault – "he did something crazy, I was ahead and he just rammed into the back of me, it was a big collision" – Clement reckons it was just a matter of bad timing.

"Philippaerts came on the inside and passed me cleanly but he stopped in the mud in front of me while I was already fully on the gas. We came together pretty hard and we both crashed but that was just a racing incident. We both lost a lot – I lost sixth place and that's a very good position for me and Philippaerts lost a lot of championship points so the outcome was very bad. David is a little bit angry about it but it was just racing..."

While that sort of behaviour might not win many friends out on the track, for fans, industry bods and team managers alike Clement has become a must-watch commodity. But what does the future hold and will us Euro fans be watching it live or like so much French-speaking talent will we lose Clement to the land of dollars, donuts, the Dixie Chicks and drive-thrus?

"I do like supercross a lot but to be good at supercross I must train a lot for it. One of my goals is to race supercross in America and I'm already working toward that – it may not happen soon but one day I will be there. Of course I also want to win a world championship so maybe I can be world champion and then go to America if I get the right opportunity."

*MX Panda – good on a
bike, not so good at
mating in public...*



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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHY THE PANDA'S CALLED PANDA!

There are many ways in which a rider can gain a nickname and the French have created some classics.

Ron Lechien's 'Dogger' nickname came from the fact that *le chien* in French means 'the dog' and it's the same with ex-world 250cc champ Danny 'the door' LaPorte – but that doesn't work for Clement who'd have to have 'of room' on the back of his pants.

Hmmmm, so where does MX Panda come from? "It came from a friend of mine," says Clement. "He called me panda because he thinks that I eat all the time – just like a panda. It's true that I love to eat and sometimes I can't stop."

That's settled that then...



DESALLE DISSECTED...

THE RIDERS, INDUSTRY AND TEAM MANAGERS PUT THEIR PENNETH IN!

STEVE RAMON – REIGNING MX1 WORLD CHAMPION

"I think he's made a lot of progress in the last couple of months and sometimes he can be very fast. He's not the best starter and that makes it difficult for him but he's still young and I think he has a great future."

MARTIN VAN GENDEREN – KRT TEAM MANAGER

"There are a lot of riders in the picture now and Desalle is one of them. He's young and he's riding very well, I think a lot of people will be interested in him. It's hard to say if he'll be a future champion but he's already very talented and if he continues to improve then I think he's one of the guys who could go for the title not now but in the future."

ADAM WHEELER – PETE DOHERTY'S COUSIN

"He's one of the most stylish riders in MX1 – he even rides his pitbike with elbows cocked!"

STEFAN EVERTS – 10-TIME WORLD CHAMPION

"He's another Belgian guy but not from the Flemish side – it's nice to have another one from the French part of the country. I've been watching Clement for a while and he's been showing good things. I think he's finished his studies now and he's beginning to come through now he's able to go wide open on his training – I think he will come stronger and stronger."

"I especially like the way he's not scared of anybody and he's definitely not scared to battle with the top guys. He's quite aggressive, he has a good attitude, he has a different style than others but that's okay because he's going fast with it."



Clement's picked up a lot of style pointers from watching US DVDs

SYLVAIN GEBOERS – TEKA SUZUKI WMX1 TEAM MANAGER

"He is a rider with good potential, he's very young but he is already very strong on the 450 and he improves his performance race by race. He's definitely someone to follow for the future."

"At the moment I can't say anything negative about his performance but he has to progress because he's still very young. He has a long way to go but he has everything that's necessary to be a champion and he's somebody I'll be watching for the future."

KEN DE DYCKER – FORMER MX1 SERIES LEADER

"Clement's a young guy but he doesn't give up and I like that – that's how racers should be. I like it when somebody fights back and I don't worry about him pushing me. We had a good race in Portugal and both crashed but there are no hard feelings, we're quite good friends and we talk a little bit away from the track."

ASHLEY KANE – GOBBY GEORDIE

"I think he's awesome. I think he looks good on the bike, he's really aggressive, he never gives up and never backs down to anybody and he's got not respect for reputations. I think the guy has something about him, he's definitely one for the future – he's a safe bet let's put it that way."

brit mx wrap

Simpson leads a
suffering Swordy into
the opening turn



SERIES STANDINGS

MX1>>

1	Billy MacKenzie (Monster CAS Honda)	200 points
2	James Noble (KTM UK)	177
3	Brad Anderson (Swift Suzuki)	166
4	Mark Jones (ARB Kawasaki)	160
5	Wayne Smith (Pioneer Emberson Yamaha)	157
6	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	157
7	Mark Eastwood (Wiseco Honda)	108
8	Mark Hucklebridge (MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	98
9	Bryan MacKenzie (Twisted-7 Kawasaki)	88
10	Kenneth Gundersen (UTAG Yamaha.com)	78

MX2>>

1	Shaun Simpson (KTM UK)	207 points
2	Stephen Sword (Molson Kawasaki)	198
3	Martin Barr (UTAG Yamaha.com)	181
4	Carl Nunn (Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	127
5	Jason Dougan (Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	124
6	Neville Bradshaw (DB Honda)	120
7	Elliot Banks-Browne (Swift Suzuki)	112
8	Marcus Norlen (Suso MVR-D Suzuki)	102
9	Mel Pocock (UTAG Yamaha.com)	82
10	Lewis Gregory (Relentless Suzuki)	81

SHAUN OF THE RED!

WITH SWORDY RIDING INJURED SHAUN SIMPSON'S ABLE TO TAKE MAXIMUM POINTS AND THE SERIES LEADER'S RED NUMBER PLATE IN D-TOWN

Words by Sutty Photo by rayarcher.com

As the Maxxis British motocross championship entered its second half with round five of the eight-round series at Desertmartin in Northern Ireland, it kinda looked like both the MX1 and MX2 championships were a done deal. In MX1 Billy MacKenzie hadn't been headed all year – that's eight holeshots and eight race wins out of eight – and the CAS rider sat on a rather tasty 65-point lead while in MX2 Stephen Sword had overcome some early season misfortune to stretch out a 22-point gap and seemed to be headed away.

But between the fourth round of the Maxxis at Lyng and the fifth round at Desertmartin were a month's worth of GPs and they tragically took their toll on our domestic series leaders... At the French GP in St Jean d'Angely Billy Mac picked up a concussion as well as some soft tissue damage in his right shoulder while Swordy dislocated the AC joint in his. With his healthy lead MacKenzie was able to skip Desertmartin and still retain his series lead – Sword was not!

The MX2 red plate holder hadn't sat on a bike since nano-seconds before highsiding into the sun-baked French dirt seven days earlier. In a lot of pain and racing at Desertmartin purely as an exercise in damage limitation – that's points damage and not physical – the 28-year-old toughs it out on one of the UK's most physically demanding tracks to finish with an 11-12 scorecard.

Capitalising on Swordy's misfortune is Shaun Simpson whose mission heading into Desertmartin is simple – "win both motos and come away with the points lead!" – and that's exactly what he does. Only headed briefly by local hero Martin Barr in moto one, Simpson keeps 'er lit all day long and leaves with a nifty nine-point lead in the championship!

Barr battles to second overall with a 2-2 scorecard while Carl Nunn shows some of his old form to go 4-3 for third. But what about that South African Irishman from Northampton, Neville Bradshaw? The DB Racing Honda rider DNFs race one but bounces back with a full throttle third in race two – good work Beast!

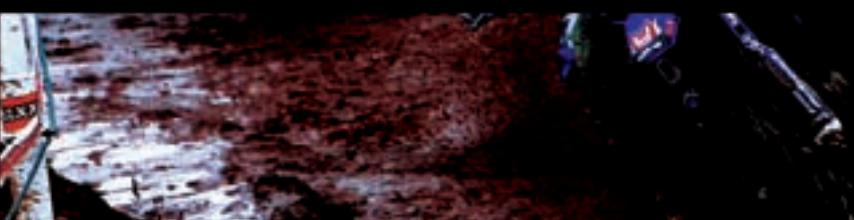
While Simpson's win in MX2 is an easy one to predict, with Billy gone the MX1 class is wide open. And when it's all done and dusted not even an oddball like Ralph Wiggum could have predicted the outcome – that would have been almost impossible.

On the list of likely winners Wayne Smith's name must have been somewhere down near the bottom along with Ray Rowson's but unbelievably it's that unlikely pair who stand on the podium at the end of the day – after winning a moto apiece – along with much safer bet James Noble.

Stepping up to the MX1 class with PAR Honda for '08, Rowson's missed most of the year so far through an injury picked up at the Hawkstone pre-season international. Returning to domestic action at Desertmartin, Ray has a dream comeback as he dominates qualifying and then does the same with race one!

Wayne Smith squeezes his Pioneer Yamaha home in second place behind Ray before dominating race two from the front to take his first ever MX1 British championship overall win. Rowson had been chasing the Cumbrian hard until he crashed at the midway point and eventually finishes fifth.

With a 3-2 scorecard Noble finishes second on the day sandwiched between Smith and Rowson and closes down MacKenzie's lead in the series to 23 points. With three rounds left and 150 points up for grabs it's all still to play for. |



SERIES STANDINGS

E1 >>

1	Mike Ahola	186 points
2	Ivan Cervantes	176
3	Simone Albergoni	165
4	Cristobal Guerrero	118
5	Marc Germain	115
6	Eero Remes	112
10	Tom Sagar	68
12	Daryl Bolter	58

E2 >>

1	Jonny Aubert	183 points
2	Juha Salminen	164
3	Alessandro Belometti	135
4	Joakim Ljunggren	126
5	Rodrig Thain	110
6	Valtteri Salonen	107

E3 >>

1	Samuli Aro	189 points
2	Marko Tarkkala	163
3	Christophe Nambotin	155
4	Sebastien Guillaume	138
5	Marcus Kehr	122
6	Bjorne Carlsson	118
14	Euan McConnell	49
24	Gordon Clarke	14

EJ >>

1	Marc Bourgeois	174 points
2	Thomas Oldrati	172
3	Oriol Mena	131
4	Roni Nikander	88
5	Oscar Balletti	81
6	Mirko Gritti	79
9	Simon Wakely	64
13	Greg Evans	44
25	Ashley Wood	19
36	Ollie Moyce	10



POLE POSITION!

SALMINEN DOUBLES UP IN POLAND BUT IT'S JOHNNY AUBERT WHO'S THE E2 PACE-SETTER

Photo by Jonty Edmunds

After a six-week break the World Enduro Championship resumes with a hot and dry two-day encounter on the northern plains of Poland and with very little rain falling on the area for some time the going is very dusty. It's been a few years since a major international championship enduro has been held in Poland and the Kwidzynski club pull out all the stops to put on a great event that welcomes back the world's best off-road riders.

Mika Ahola and Ivan Cervantes resume their year-long battle in the E1 class and although the fast sandy going should theoretically suit Finn Ahola more it's actually Spaniard Cervantes who does the double and takes both day wins. But despite his pair of Polish victories Ivan still sits some 10 points behind Ahola in the championship and must seriously be regretting the first race of the year in Sweden where he only finished sixth.

Batting Brits Tom Sagar and Daryl Bolter acquit themselves well on Polish soil with Sagar scoring seventh and eighth place finishes on his KTM while Bolter steers his Husky to an 11th and a ninth.

Juha Salminen takes a double win in Poland on his KTM ahead of E2 championship leader Jonny Aubert. The steely-eyed Frenchman has no match for Salminen's pace in Poland but currently holds down a 19-point lead in the championship. While Alessandro Belometti finishes third on day one it's BMW's Simo Kirssi who gives the Bavarian brand its first ever WEC podium on day two proving the G450X is a potent performer in the right hands.

"It's been a hard weekend but it's great to have got my own and BMW's first podium result," said Kirssi. "The conditions here are a little like those found in Finland which helped me and I enjoyed the race. I never thought that I would finish on the podium. I struggled a little bit on the first lap on day one, even though I was pushing hard. But as the track got rougher I found things easier and my special test times improved."

Husqvarna's Sébastien Guillaume and Finnish KTM rider Marko Tarkkala trade E3 class wins although it's still the mighty Finn Samuli Aro who leads the WEC's highest capacity division despite suffering with a non-race-related hand injury that's severe enough to warrant a bone and skin graft. Finishing second and third in Poland, Aro only loses one point to team-mate Tarkkala in the championship chase.

Scot Euan McConnell makes a strong showing in Poland, finally clocking in with a 15-13 scorecard on the Electraction TM. "I found this event tough," says Euan. "The track was whooped out and the day was really long. I found the enduro test the most difficult because it quickly turned into very deep ruts and I struggled with my long legs. The second day was a definite improvement for me although I still didn't finish as high in the results as I hoped I would."

In the uber-competitive Junior World Cup it's Frenchman Marc Burgeois and Italian stallion Thomas Oldrati who trade wins over the two days. While Burgeois backs up his day one win with a second place on day two, Oldrati's day one third allows Burgeois to open up a two-point lead in the championship.

The next round of the WEC goes down in proper enduro country in Llanidloes – that'll be mid-Wales – on July 19/20 where the Brits will no doubt be hoping for some home country luck to help them stamp on up the standings.

Johnny Aubert holds a comfortable lead at the top of the E2 standings

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1 >>

1	David Philippaerts	(Monster Yamaha)	266 points
2	Josh Coppins	(Monster Yamaha)	262
3	Steve Ramon	(Teka Suzuki)	250
4	Ken De Dycker	(Teka Suzuki)	240
6	Sebastien POURCEL	(GPKR Kawasaki)	231
7	Jon Barragan	(Silver Action KTM)	191
8	Tanel Leok	(Kawasaki Racing Team)	186
9	Billy MacKenzie	(CAS Honda)	176
10	Marc De Reuver	(Martin Honda)	156
18	James Noble	(KTM UK)	65
19	Tom Church	(Molson Kawasaki)	43
25	Brad Anderson	(Swift Suzuki)	27
37	Wayne Smith	(Pioneer Yamaha)	5
39	Jordan Rose	(STR Honda)	3

MX2 >>

1	Tyla Rattray	(Red Bull KTM)	326 points
2	Tommy Searle	(Red Bull KTM)	315
3	Antonio Cairoli	(De Carli Yamaha)	310
4	Shaun Simpson	(KTM UK)	209
5	Rui Goncalves	(Red Bull KTM)	198
6	Nico Aubin	(Ricci Yamaha)	188
7	Xavier Boog	(Suzuki Inotec)	173
8	Manuel Monni	(3C Yamaha)	157
9	Stephen Sword	(Molson Kawasaki)	151
10	Jeremy Van Horebeek	(Champ KTM)	148
16	Gautier Paulin	(Molson Kawasaki)	86
19	Carl Nunn	(Suso Suzuki)	65
24	Jason Dougan	(Suso Suzuki)	30
29	Elliot Banks-Browne	(Swift Suzuki)	17
31	Pascal Leuret	(Swift Suzuki)	16
42	Neville Bradshaw	(DB Racing Honda)	2
43	Marcus Norlen	(Suso Suzuki)	2

Josh goes 2-2 in France and then
1-1 in Germany to get his world
title hopes reet back on t'track

SECOND COMING!

JOSH COPPINS MAKES ONE OF THE BIGGEST COMEBACKS SINCE THAT OTHER JC BLOKE...

Words and photo by Sutty

Without wanting to sound just like Big Brother gangsta Alexander De Gale may I just say 'remember that I told you'...

Poe-faced on the podium at Mallory Park after getting drubbed by Sicilian moto-magician Tony Cairoli at his home grand prix, Tommy Searle's all smiles in France as the now 19-year-old celebrates his birthday in style with a double moto victory that sees him turn a 10-point deficit into a four-point lead by the end of the day.

Tommy's lucky break comes in turn one of moto one when Tyla Rattray and Cairoli clash together while Tommy sits third behind compatriots Shaun Simpson and Stephen Sword. When Sword hits the back of Shaun in turn two and crashes Tommy's second and after a brief skirmish with the Scottish KTM star he's out front and gone – job done, 25 points in the bag...

While it's not unfeasible that Cairoli and Rattray could both come from the back to at least the top five, that feat becomes an impossible task for Cairoli when Steven Frossard torpedoes the carbon fibre petrol tank of the fallen De Carli Yamaha, splitting it beyond repair and dumping its high octane race fuel into the freshly bulldozed dirt. Cairoli DNFs, Rattray comes back to sixth and Tommy leads the world as predicted last month.

Moto two sees Tommy get the holeshot while Cairoli starts third behind Simpson before moving by both Brits to take the lead. But it's a short lived thing as the Italian star throws his bike down the track leaving Searle and Rattray to fight over first. There's less than a second in it at the finish with Searle keeping his factory KTM ahead to increase his lead in the series.

While everything goes Tommy's way in France, the next round of the world championship at Teutschenthal in Germany sees a reversal of fortunes for Searle. Crashing on lap one of his qualifier and again later in the heat when he's already safely in a transfer position, young Tommy is forced to the LCQ which he of course wins easily but still only gets 25th pick for the gate. With much further to travel to the first turn than the guys on the inside there isn't a hope in hell of Tommy gating near the front.

Fighting from 11th to third in the sweltering summer heat punishes the young Brit physically so after running as high as second in race two Tommy tires and falls back to ninth place at the flag. Cairoli and Rattray trade wins to outscore Tommy by 15 points on the day which means that Tommy's now 11 points behind the series leader – this time it's team-mate Rattray – in the standings.

Simpson meanwhile elevates himself from fifth to fourth in the championship, bypassing Nico Aubin with yet more solid rides. A whopping 101 points back on Cairoli it's unlikely Shaun will bridge the gap to the leading three – unless one or more gets injured – but fourth looks like a real possibility as he's by far the most consistent of the riders around him.

The Molson squad lose both MX2 riders to injury in France. Gautier Paulin makes it to turn two in the qualification heat of his home GP before breaking his collarbone while Swordy steps off the factory Kawasaki at high speed in moto two and is sent to l'hôpital with a dislocated AC joint. Both riders are conspicuously absent in Germany but it's hoped that Stephen will return for the Swedish GP to hopefully consolidate his top 10 championship position.

Suso Suzuki's Jason Dougan has a season-best 11th in moto one at France – unfortunately it's his only score this month – while team-mate Carl Nunn misses out on points in France but scores both times in Teutschenthal. Swift Suzuki's Elliot Banks-Browne crashes so hard in the French round's LCQ – just after setting the second fastest time of the session – that

he's unable to ride in Germany after bravely giving moto one at Saint Jean d'Angely a shot while Jake Nicholls fails to make the grade after crashing in both of his heat races. UTAG Yamaha's Mel Pocock continues to give it everything he's got but still hasn't found that little bit extra to make it into the points-paying races.

Billy MacKenzie has everyone wondering just what he's doing during the timed qualification session in France. Repeatedly running laps that aren't quick enough for the Scotsman to make the grade, it later transpires that Billy binned it on his first fast lap, cracked his shoulderblade and whacked his head hard enough for his wee mcbain to be running in fast forward for the next few days. Under the false impression that he's tapped out like a legend, for the rest of the session Billy circulates up on the pegs at sighting lap pace and fails to make the cut – not that he'd have been in any fit state to race anyway.

But after skipping the British championship round at Desertram, Billy's back at Teutschenthal and back on the gas. Third in Saturday's timed practice, MacKenzie hustles the lead from Max Nagl on lap one of moto one and holds the world's best at bay for 15 minutes before the pain-killing freeze spray wears off. Then suffering with pain from his fudged up shoulder and some seriously stiffening arm pump, Billy fades back to 15th at the flag.

Miraculously MacKenzie leads moto two as well and just when it looks like he might have the legs to win the thing bails off on to – yep, you've guessed it – his cracked shoulder. Remounting in fourth the Scotsman's rhythm is ruined and he rampages backwards through the field to 10th – still a frickin' awesome ride all things considered.

After a slow start to the season Josh Coppins returns to form in France with a pair of second place finishes behind the GP scene's fastest and most inconsistent rider Sébastien Pourcel. Two weeks later JC goes one better in Germany – twice – to take his first double win since Mantova last summer and move to within four points of the series lead.

Josh is undoubtedly helped by each and every other title contender's lack of ability to keep it rubber side down. Series leader David Philippaerts crashes by himself in moto one at the French GP and then tangles with full throttle panda Clement Desalle in the second encounter which leads to both riders not scoring. Carrying injured ribs into Teutschenthal, Philippaerts runs 3-6 on the day for fourth overall.

Suzuki's Steve Ramon is another who can't keep his bike shiny side up. The 27-year-old is skittled off the track by a rock in race one at St Jean d'Angely when he's headed away from the pack, finishes third in race two behind Pourcel and JC, then second in moto one at Germany which pulls him to within four points of Philippaerts in the championship.

But before he can strike while the waffle-iron is hot and take the series lead, not-so-steady Steve undoes all his hard work by causing the mother, brother or any other sucker of all pile-ups at the start of race two when he cross-ruts on the face of a jump and ends up collecting the KTMs of Jonathan Barragan and Marcus Schiffer in the ensuing carnage. After pitting to partially straighten his seriously tweaked factory Suzuki, Ramon rides out the moto for an 18th place finish.

The MX1 Brits continue to improve as the season progresses. James Noble is on it in France but doesn't score in Germany after hurting his wrist in qualification, Tom Church is riding the fo-fiddy better than ever and Marshfield's premier 26-year-old motocross racer has a 100 per cent points scoring record this month while Brad Anderson battles with the Swift Suzuki to score in three motos from four.

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An advertisement for Muc-Off motorcycle cleaning and protection products. The top half features a large, stylized 'MUC-OFF' logo with a white-to-black gradient. Below it, the words 'CLEAN & PROTECT' are written in a bold, italicized font. In the center, there's a close-up of a motorcycle wheel with a chain. To the right, several product bottles are displayed: a black bottle labeled 'Matt Protect', a pink bottle labeled 'Muc-Off', and another pink bottle partially visible. The background is dark with some metallic and colorful highlights. In the top right corner, there's a 'YAMAHA' logo with 'MOTORCYCLES' underneath, and below that, 'Moto-Plus Yamaha Motocross' and the 'Kawasaki' logo.

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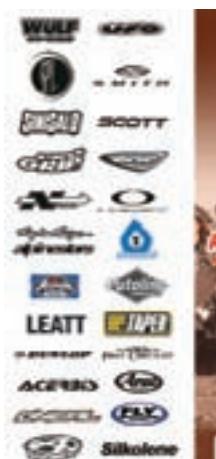
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The image features a central graphic for TDA-MX. It includes a checkered globe with a metallic finish, set against a background of stylized orange and yellow flames. Surrounding this central logo are several other well-known motorcycle and motocross brands: Esentia Chainwheels, Alpinestars, Silkolene, UFO, Troy Lee Designs, and O'Neal. The overall design is dynamic and suggests speed and power.

The advertisement features the CMX logo at the top left, consisting of a yellow 'C' with a black silhouette of a biker inside it, followed by the letters 'M' and 'X' in a large, bold, black font. Below the logo is the website 'CMXCENTRE.CO.UK'. The main image is an aerial view of a large, complex off-road motocross track with multiple loops and jumps, situated near a body of water. To the right of the main image are four smaller, square photographs showing various motocross riders in action on the track.



An advertisement for Middleton Motocross. The top half features the brand name 'Middleton' in a large, stylized, serif font above 'Motocross' in a bold, blocky font. To the right, the text 'Since 1976' is written in a smaller serif font. Below the main title, the slogan 'The Largest Selection of MX & LEISUREWEAR IN THE COUNTRY' is displayed in a white box. A large image of a person on a dirt bike performing a wheelie dominates the center. At the bottom left, the slogan 'ABSOLUTELY! POSITIVELY! DEFINITELY!' is repeated three times in a bold, sans-serif font. On the right side, the phrase 'If it's trick, WE DO IT!' is written in a stylized, slanted font. The bottom section contains contact information: a large phone number 'T: 01773 748045 / 852455', the website 'www.middletonmx.com', the address '21 Nottingham Road, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 3DJ', and the note 'Mail order specialist - All major credit cards taken'. The bottom right corner features the word 'GEAR' in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

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FIGHTING ON!

JACK PLOWMAN'S GETTING OVER THE TRAGIC LOSS OF HIS DAD BY LETTING HIS RIDING DO THE TALKING...

Words and photos by still-mx.co.uk

Possibly the hardest thing to deal with in life is the death of a family member and Jack Plowman has had to come to terms with the loss of his father just before Christmas. Rage spent some time with Jack at the Pontrilas round of the DEP championship to find out how things are going for the 16-year-old from Feltham.

Rage: Firstly Jack, we'd like to offer our condolences on the loss of your dad. It must have been a huge shock to you...

JP: "It was a massive shock for me because my dad had looked after me as a single parent from the age of eight months old."

Rage: He put a lot of time and effort into your racing – how are you managing now that everything has changed for you?

JP: "I think of myself as quite lucky because I have got good friends to keep me carrying on with my racing and to try and keep things the way they were before my dad's death as much as they can."

Rage: In the eight years you have been riding where have you been doing most of your racing? **JP:** "I have been doing most of my riding at Portsmouth and Ringwood schoolboy clubs and also the BSMA championships."

Rage: So far in the races you have competed in you have come out swinging. Tell us about the championships you are taking part in?

JP: "Yeah, I've been doing pretty well considering I have not ridden in a year and I have been able to ride in the bigger championships such as the DEP two-stroke championship and the Elite Youth Cup."

Rage: How about your results? How are things going this season?

JP: "I'm quite happy with them as I have had a third in the second round of the DEP and an eighth at the third round. The fourth round here at Pontrilas I managed a second which is great so things are going pretty well alongside the Elite Youth Cup where I have had a first."

Rage: We notice you're on a Pioneer Yamaha 125 two-stroke – how does it feel riding for such a legendary motocross personality as Roy Emberson?

JP: "The support from Roy is good as he has helped me with the bike, parts and entry fees and also Gary Bill (Gary Bill Racing) has been helping a lot with the bike maintenance and anything else that he can do to help."

Rage: Tell us a little bit about how the support from Embo came about...

JP: "Gary Bill introduced me to Roy and he took me out practising and I guess he was impressed as he said he would help out with some sponsorship and that he would be keeping an eye on me over this season to see what would be available for next year."

Rage: So when it comes to practising and getting to the races who helps you out on that side of things?

JP: "Gary and my good friend Glen help me out with that and I have some other friends that practice regularly so I am extremely lucky to have them around me."

Rage: You have the determination to do well and fitness will help you on your way so what do you do to get race fit?

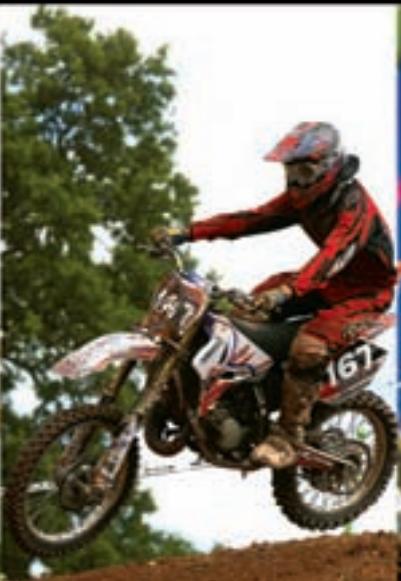
JP: "I want to do the best I can in this sport and training is very important to me. I train hard by doing 20 minutes of rowing, 20 minutes of running followed by the same amount of cycling or seven to eight miles at least five times a week."

Rage: We are approaching mid season for 2008 – if all goes well what would you like to be doing next year?

JP: "I know what I would like to be doing but I am really not too sure because I rely on so many people. I will have to see what options are open to me. I just hope that I can take it further in the sport and reach my potential."

Rage: We wish you well Jack and know that your dad would be proud of you. Who would you like to thank for everything so far?

JP: "I would like to thank my dad for everything he managed to do, Roy Emberson, Gary Bill, Glen and all of my good friends."





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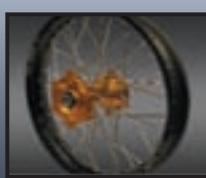


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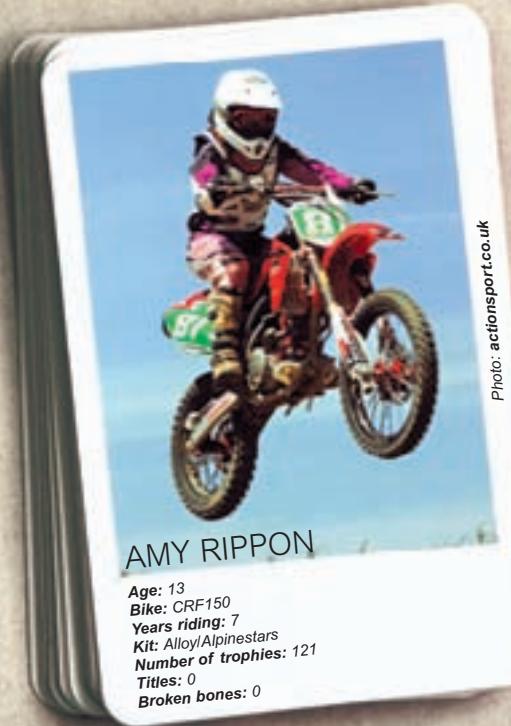


Photo: actionsport.co.uk

AMY RIPPON

Age: 13
Bike: CRF150
Years riding: 7
Kit: Alloy/Alpinestars
Number of trophies: 121
Titles: 0
Broken bones: 0



Photo: actionsport.co.uk

OLIVER RIPPON

Age: 8
Bike: KTM 65/Suzuki 65
Years riding: 2
Kit: Alloy/Alpinestars
Number of trophies: 28
Titles: 0
Broken bones: 0



MAX ANSTIE!

THE BRIT ABROAD WINS NINE OUT OF NINE AT HONEYLAKE AND THEN HANDS OUT A BEATING TO ELI TOMAC AT GLEN HELEN...

Back in America we had a few days of testing before heading out to Honeylake for a Loretta Lynn's Qualifier where I only had to place in the top five to go through to the real deal. I'm only aiming to qualify in both Supermini classes but also qualified in the 125cc schoolboy to give me a choice. I managed to win all nine races I entered!

The weekend after our visit to Reno I found myself on the startline at the famous Glen Helen track watching Eli Tomac's dad get in a fight with the officials... It all started a mere two hours before when we both went out in the wrong practice. Immediately we were disqualified for the day! Of course for me it didn't really matter because I had already qualified the previous weekend but for ET it was a different story. If he didn't make it here he wouldn't be able to race at Loretta's!

I was all set on going to the beach for the day when one of the officials came over and told us they wanted to see a battle so they let us race!

But we had to go to the line in last. We were waiting for the other 40 riders to go on to the gate when they called number 43! Knowing he had to go last he quietly slipped onto the start in about 15th. Then the uproar started! The other parents were shouting and complaining and the officials came over and took every single rider off the gate...ha ha! And that was when I was sat there watching the calm and calculated John Tomac's cage get a little rattled.

I had six motos and was sure that there would be some good races. The first two motos were much the same. I sat right in behind Tomac for the whole race figuring out my passing moves!

During this time ET's mom was calling me all sorts of nasty names – she reckoned I shouldn't be racing when I'd already qualified! In the second two motos I was ready to strike and tucked right in behind him when he made a mistake both times and gave it to me. The last motos were very close! I was once again right

behind ET (in both motos) and used my cunning to overpower him! Just as we launched into the sand section I switched inside outside then (in both motos) squeezed by ET feet-up Dutch style!

After that exciting day we prepared for the next action-packed day...on 125s! I love the 125s! I only had three races but had many battles with my team-mate Jason Anderson. I just seem to fit the big bike really well and when I went off the line in the first moto I knew it was going to be good. I came around in about fifth and doing some fat scrubs pushed into second behind Jason. I managed to close the gap and after railing a huge rut at the bottom of the hill slingshot past him.

In the second moto a sweet burn-out on the start put me neck and neck with the other KTM rider! And funny enough we went across the finish within half-a-bike of each other! The third moto went a little smoother as I found myself out in front early and kept it like that. Woohoo!

RAGE PACK'S BACK!

Due to popular demand we've resurrected our monthly playing cards so if you want to appear in these here Rage pages check out Oliver and Amy Rippon's details, substitute their info for yours and send everything in along with a good quality snap to the postal address on page 15. If you've got a digital pic (between two and four meg only please) then email it along with your details to rage@dirtbikerider.co.uk

HONEST OFF!

Herman Hoff, the man behind the annual Honest International, has been forced to pull the plug on this year's event – scheduled for July 26/27 at Duns – due to a lack of entries.

"I would like to extend huge thanks to the people who worked hard to make it the great event which it would have been had enough riders supported it," says Herman. "This could have been a great event for Scotland."

Max

SPACE CADET!

BILLY BANGS HIS BOUNCE IN FRANCE AND HITS THE FAST FORWARD BUTTON...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Sutty

Let's start at France which has been the main contributor to most of what's been going on in my little world this month. I had a great week leading up to France – I set off mid-week on a little roadtrip down south and as Princey had my bike I had to meet up with him to get some riding done.

I called Tommy and we all met up to have a little riding session together and things were going well, I was riding good and feeling comfortable with the bike after the previous weekend off. After riding I drove down to my old residence in Portsmouth and stopped with Dougan and his family for a couple of nights before he joined me in the camper to be my wingman on the road down to France.

Banter was in full flow as usual with Dougan on board and I arrived in France relaxed and enjoying myself which felt like the start of the season again. I'd been kinda screwing my head up a little bit looking for more answers to my trademark mistakes in the first motos and I thought the best way to sort that out was to enjoy the atmosphere at the track and feel good on the bike. Everything was going to plan, or rather not to plan – it was just happening naturally. I didn't touch the set-up with the bike at all on Saturday, I wasn't thinking too much and I was getting on and having a blast and posting some decent lap times.

The team were a lot happier too as in previous GPs I'd been changing too many things and trying to look for more out of the bike in order to ride my hardest. But the trick was just to relax and the results were coming to me! It was great!

However, things took a turn for the worse. On my first fast lap of qualifying I came out a tight 180 degree left-hander at the top of one of St Jean d'Angely's steep hills, got a little cross-rutted as I straightened up for the step down (kinda like Bubba's big crash at Hangtown last year) and kept it open and still went for the jump as it was too late to back off. The front wheel was out the rut, the back wheel was in and I took off completely crossed up but still thought I could save it. I landed not that straight but it was pretty soft and it snapped the bike from my arms and high-sided me down the hill!

From that moment the only thing I remember is the impact when I hit my head, a big flash and a short movie-like clip of memories from god knows when before I crawled off the track at the bottom of the hill! Does anyone ever get that when you knock your head hard? For me it's like someone slipping a record of a memory...ach, it's hard to explain – the people who have knocked their head might know, the others will just think I'm mental!

So I crawled off the track and had what I thought was a little moment with myself. Apparently it was a big moment. It felt like I sat down, got myself together, wriggled my shoulder

a little to feel if it was okay, then jumped back on the bike. I found out later that day that I was out on that lap for 12 minutes! I must have been sitting there for a long time – I was completely not with it!

I thought I was okay – I thought it was just my shoulder that was a bit sore – but I was sure I could still qualify even with a niggling little injury. I came to the pits, got the bike straightened out, got myself together and stuff then went for a lap. The lap was painful – all the downhills were killing my shoulder – but it was only for a lap. I came in thinking that it was good enough but I was down in 35th! For the rest of the session I was out there giving it everything I had but each time I came round to the mechanics they were telling me I wasn't in. I couldn't understand it – I thought even one of my slower laps would be enough to get in.

So I didn't qualify. I went back to my camper and locked myself in the garage bit. I could hear people coming to the camper looking for me but I stayed silent in the back with my helmet and goggles still on in complete darkness. My shoulder was ****d but I was more upset about not qualifying. Eventually Princey found me and tried getting me to go to the hospital but I was over it, what was the point? I didn't qualify so there was no rush and I wanted to sulk and cry! I was still fifth in the championship at that point and I knew with two no-scores that was the job ****d so I needed to be left alone!

Eventually I built myself a little bridge and got over it, Ash took me to the hospital and I had some x-rays. No damage they said. So I was even more pissed off that I had pussied out and not qualified. However, Ash kept asking if I was all right and if I had banged my head – I thought I was so I kept getting annoyed every time he asked.

When I got back to the pits and sat down with the boys we started talking about what happened. I explained the crash etc, then they asked why I was riding so slowly past the pit box. "What you on about, I was wide open?" I replied. They all just looked at each other and chuckled. Turns out I wasn't quite with it! Since the crash everything had felt like it was going in fast forward and I actually thought I had that 450 locked wide open past the pit box. So I think the reason I didn't qualify is just the fact that I had banged my head pretty hard and was riding round a bit dazed!

The team took it well, they had seen that I tried and that I was really upset about the whole thing so there was not much I could do but try and enjoy the weekend. I loved watching the girls' races and the MX2. I was like a little fan watching the girls, especially Livia Lancelot! I had made a deal with her during the week that if she won I'd get her shirt – she didn't quite manage the overall but she was still fast and gave me her shirt! I was so pumped – like being

back at Foxhill as a little fan trying to get shirts. Princey wouldn't let me wear it though...

Another shocker that weekend was Brownie. He had talked with me quite a bit that he was down with how he was riding and stuff and not really enjoying it. I thought it was maybe just because he was riding by himself and stuff so I was trying to get him back on track by offering him to stay with me so we coulda rode and trained together more. But he had already made his mind up, he talked with the team and stuff that weekend and they both agreed that it was best if he went home. I was gutted! Brownie has been the best team-mate I've had – he's such a legend and I got to know him pretty well so before he left I got his shirt too! After that I drove straight to Belgium with the team for more check-ups with the doctors – turns out I cracked my shoulderblade in the crash!

We had Desertmartin the next weekend and I really wanted to keep my win streak going! I did everything I possibly could to get it better for that race – laser treatment, physio, swimming, calcium tablets. I thought if I could ride those laps in France after I crashed I could grind out a weekend at Desertmartin – even for a couple of top-fives – just so I could secure the championship a bit more and ride that 500 two-smoke at the last round! All I had was my practice bike at home and the team had already decided that we were not doing it but I was getting impatient and I wanted to ride! I tried riding at my local track on the Saturday morning but it was pretty sore – I coulda rode but it would defo have made it worse so I didn't go.

I gave it another week of physio and all the rest but it still wasn't good and I started to really worry about Germany – I wasn't sure I could even ride. So I rested it for the rest of the week and came to Germany with a bag full of painkillers! I couldn't believe how well the weekend was going, my times were good again and I qualified third – one of my best qualifying positions!

The races started off amazing, I led both and got that buzz for winning again. But I could only go for 20 minutes before my shoulder dropped and the painkillers wore off. It was so frustrating! But we took the positives from the weekend – if I can lead both races with a broken shoulder then hopefully when I'm healthy again I should bring home the bacon for you guys! I need to win at least one GP this year – I can't have Japan being the monkey on my back for the rest of my life!

Away from racing Scotland has been fantastic recently, the weather has been scorching hot and the beach has been very inviting, as has Edinburgh so there have been regular trips up town for the banter. We found a great little hangout pub with a room that is just a massive big bed so everyone lounges around and blethers away all night!

Laters...

Billy

*Billy flies through
the pain barrier to
lead in Germany*





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